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# *Illinois Issues*

*A publication of the University of Illinois at Springfield*

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## **Young black and male**

*Neither an economic boom  
nor poverty programs had much effect*



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## The nation will pay for failing to invest in its young black males

by Peggy Boyer Long

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technology-driven economy and stiffer enforcement of child support orders against noncustodial fathers who are themselves poor. Other obstacles have been identified over the decades: a



*Vincent Blue, 18, attends Tomorrow's Builders Charter School for dropouts in East St. Louis.*

Southern Illinois University Carbondale, bring us up-to-date, giving the growing national problem a state focus and highlighting potential solutions, including an alternative school for dropouts in East

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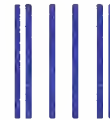
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Peggy Boyer Long



## The nation will pay for failing to invest in its young black males

by Peggy Boyer Long

**A** decade after federal welfare reform began to move women with children from welfare to work, activists and scholars are turning a spotlight on the plight of America's young black men.

While women have made some social and economic gains under policies designed to promote work and limit public assistance, young men are losing ground. Black men in particular. Studies released this summer show that, more than any other cohort, black males increasingly are disconnected from school and from work.

One study, conducted for the Urban Institute, lays out these grim statistics: Only half of African-American men ages 16-24 who aren't in school are working; and roughly one-third of young African-American men are in jail or prison, or on parole or probation, at any given time.

A few of the challenges faced by these young men are recent in origin: fewer chances for higher-paying industrial jobs in a service-oriented, technology-driven economy and stiffer enforcement of child support orders against noncustodial fathers who are themselves poor. Other obstacles have been identified over the decades: a

decline in the quality of inner-city schools, a rise in harsher drug sentencing and the migration of jobs and the middle class to the suburbs, which further separates the unskilled from potential work and leaves the poor behind with few, if any, role models in the labor force.

Through the 20th century, Chicago served as a laboratory for the study of these economic and social shifts. Using that city's neighborhoods to draw his conclusions, scholar William Julius Wilson, formerly of the University of Chicago, tracked a growing culture of poverty in post-World War II cities that condemned blacks to poor education, idleness and crime.

In 1996, Wilson finished *When Work Disappears: The World of the New Urban Poor*, allowing *Illinois Issues* to

publish an excerpt (see December 1996, page 28). Much of what he had to say is still relevant.

"Neighborhoods that offer few legitimate employment opportunities, inadequate job information networks, and poor schools lead to the disappearance of work," he wrote. "That is, where jobs are scarce, where people rarely, if ever, have the opportunity to help their friends and neighbors find jobs, and where there is a disruptive or degraded school life purporting to prepare youngsters for eventual participation in the workforce, many people eventually lose their feeling of connectedness to work in the formal economy; they no longer expect work to be a regular, and regulating, force in their lives."

Wilson prefigured the disconnect among young people in a culture that lacks the "idea of work as a central experience of adult life."

This month, Robert Joiner, a former editorial writer and columnist for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, and Max Bittle, a photojournalism student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, bring us up-to-date, giving the growing national problem a state focus and highlighting potential solutions, including an alternative school for dropouts in East

Photograph by Max Bittle



Vincent Blue, 18, attends *Tomorrow's Builders Charter School* for dropouts in East St. Louis.

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St. Louis: Tomorrow's Builders Charter School.

Through Joiner and Bittle, we meet 20-year-old Darrell Johnson, "who dropped out of school in the seventh grade and is just now seeing a little light in his life," and "Mr. Willis," his principal, whose principles for success at school are to "maintain good attendance, maintain a good attitude, work hard and 'Don't piss Mr. Willis off.'"

Evaluating the long-term effectiveness of such schools is among the recommendations presented in the Urban Institute study. Authors Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer and Paul Offner identify three key policy areas: promoting education and job

training programs; creating financial incentives for accepting lower-paying work, including an increase in the federal minimum wage; and reducing barriers facing noncustodial fathers and former prisoners. They also conclude that progress will require personal choices, and cooperative efforts among multiple agencies.

Holzer argued in a separate essay for *The Washington Post* that "some of these efforts will require additional public resources, and many will be politically controversial. But the cost to the nation of failing to invest in all of its young men is far greater." □

Peggy Boyer Long can be reached at [peggyboy@aol.com](mailto:peggyboy@aol.com).

## National awards

### Illinois journalists honored

*Illinois Issues* columnist Charles N. Wheeler III won a first place in magazine commentary/news analysis from Capitolbeat, the Association of Capitol Reporters and Editors. The national award was presented last month at the group's conference in Columbus, Ohio. It recognized Wheeler's assessments of policy and politics in Illinois government, including wind farming and the governor's All Kids health insurance program. This is the third year in a row he has taken top honors in the annual contest. He won for columns that appeared in the magazine over the past year.

Capitolbeat is an eight-year-old association of journalists who cover the nation's Statehouses. The organization now has more than 300 members from 46 states. Illinois is well-represented. Kate Clements, Statehouse bureau chief for *The News-Gazette* of Urbana-Champaign, serves on the board.

Other Illinois journalists were honored at this year's conference.

*Chicago Sun-Times* reporters Chris Fusco, Dave McKinney, Steve Warmbir and Scott Fornek won first place in beat reporting for newspapers with circulations of more than 75,000. The group won for articles on campaign contributions, hiring and contract practices in Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration.

Copley Illinois Newspapers reporter Adriana Colindres won second place in beat reporting for newspapers with circulations under 75,000 for her news reports on policy issues, including utility regulation.

Associated Press reporter John O'Connor won second place in beat reporting for the wires for his stories on hiring in Blagojevich's administration and the relationship between state contracts and campaign contributions. He also took second place in the single report category for his article on the use of interns by the administration to get around veterans' preference in hiring. Associated Press reporter Christopher Wills won third place in commentary/news analysis for the wires for his assessments of the Blagojevich Administration.

Small Newspaper Group reporter Scott Reeder got an honorable mention for his investigation of teacher tenure.

Wheeler heads the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield, which includes an internship at the Illinois Statehouse. Colindres, O'Connor, Wills and Reeder are graduates of that program. □



# Illinois Issues

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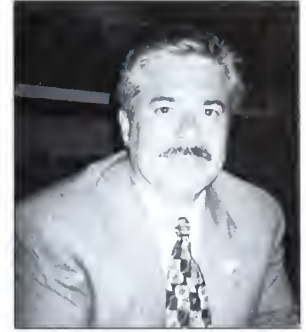


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**Credits:** The picture of 18-year-old East St. Louis resident Vincent Blum in our cover's photographic illustration was taken by Max Bittle, a photojournalism student at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

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Bethany Carson



## Unconventional candidates test whether Fred and Ethel are ready for change

by Bethany Carson

**C**andidates who dare to be different need a lot of stars to align before they can win public office. It's hard to say whether that could happen for Eric Wallace before November; yet the state Senate candidate has what it takes to break all kinds of stereotypes.

He's a doctorate-holding minister, a veteran and a businessman. The resident of Matteson in Chicago's south suburbs is unusual in that he's seeking office as an African-American Republican.

Wallace is challenging incumbent Democratic Sen. Maggie Crotty in the 19th Senate District, which has leaned Democratic since party leaders redrew the legislative lines in 2001.

Crotty worked with United Cerebral Palsy of Greater Chicago before she joined the legislature. She won a seat in House District 35 when Democrats swept the southwest suburbs in 1996. The district, which stretched north of her hometown of Oak Forest, leaned Republican and had a black population of less than 2 percent. The 2001 map shifted her territory in the opposite direction and elevated the black population to nearly 30 percent.

Wallace says he has an opportunity to resonate with African Americans who have always voted Democratic but now feel disenfranchised by both parties.

"I'm sure if I were a Democrat running, this would be a whole lot

---

*Candidates who break stereotypes could mobilize independents and other hard-to-reach segments of the electorate.*

easier," he says. "But I still think we have a good chance to turn things around out here in the south suburbs."

Being black doesn't hurt. "The fact that I'm African American opens the door, no question. People look at me and say, 'OK, what does he have to say?'"

Being a minister helps, too. "Since a large percentage of African Americans go to church, that resonates well no matter what party I am."

This election season, Illinoisans are being asked to rethink their perceptions of political candidates who break stereotypes. GOP state Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka is Illinois' second female to run for governor. Tammy Duckworth is a wounded Iraq veteran seeking a seat in the U.S. House. And Wallace is founder of the African American Republican Council of Illinois looking to give black Republicans a voice in Springfield.

Candidates who break stereotypes could mobilize independents and other hard-to-reach segments of the

electorate. But even if they beat the odds and get elected, they face the challenge of building credibility and influence in a white, male-dominated arena.

Kent Redfield, political scientist at the University of Illinois at Springfield, says neither race nor gender automatically disqualifies a person from a viable candidacy, but a lack of money and excess negative baggage can. Women candidates, in particular, continue to confront a narrow perception of who can serve in leadership.

"The assumption is you're concerned with education and health and, if you're on the national scene, that you don't have much empathy for national defense and that you may not have enough background on the fiscal side," Redfield says. "It used to be the perfect woman candidate was the widowed grandmother because she wasn't abandoning her husband or her children to run for office."

One of Topinka's problems, Redfield says, is that Illinois doesn't have a variety of role models in political leadership. The five most recent governors — Rod Blagojevich, George Ryan, Jim Edgar, Jim Thompson and Daniel Walker — are the formulaic white, male leaders.

But Topinka is not the first to try to change the equation in executive office. Dawn Clark Netsch, former Democratic



state comptroller, ran against Edgar, the Republican incumbent, but lost in '94.

Duckworth, meanwhile, is a Democrat running against Republican state Sen. Peter Roskam of Wheaton for the U.S. House seat in suburban Chicago. She's breaking one stereotype as a female member of the Illinois Army National Guard and another as a veteran who spoke against the U.S. invasion of Iraq, where a helicopter accident made her a double amputee.

Illinois voters have elected atypical female candidates to Congress before. They made Carol Moseley Braun the first African-American woman in the U.S. Senate in 1992, but they didn't re-elect her in '98. She ran for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004 but dropped out of the campaign.

Redfield says candidates who break the norm can win public office — if they don't carry negative baggage. And gender can be a plus if women have the right issue profiles.

Topinka has a grown son and is single. She's also a social and fiscal moderate.

Edgar, her honorary campaign finance chairman, says voters do have different standards when they look at a woman. They talk about her hair more than they would with a male candidate. But, he says, Topinka has potential to appeal to women voters who are more likely to be moved by such social issues as a woman's right to have an abortion.

"One of the reasons I supported her is because I thought she could do better with women voters, particularly suburban women voters," Edgar says.

It worked for Sue Caponigro. She held a sign with blue words, "Democrats for Topinka" at the State Fair's Republican Day last month. She was born and raised a Democrat in the heart of Chicago. She continued to vote blue as a single mother of two, but after retiring and living in Springfield, she became a Republican precinct committeewoman in Sangamon County just to support Topinka.

"I originally voted for Blagojevich, and now I'm doing everything I can to get him out," she said after the GOP rally. She said she likes Topinka's jobs and economic growth plan, as well as her outgoing personality.

"She's a woman's woman," Caponigro said. "OK, so she's pro-choice. So what?

---

***Potential voters often reflect the stereotypical belief about African Americans — if they vote, they're likely to vote straight down the Democratic ticket.***

She speaks her mind — that's my kind of woman."

Being male doesn't guarantee a win, either, especially when the candidate seems unusual in his district or among his political peers.

Rep. Larry McKeon, a Chicago Democrat, is a success story. He's openly gay and got elected to the Illinois House from a Democratic district that has many gay constituents.

"It fits the district, but in terms of representing the district and having influence in the legislature, he's got to confront a lot of perceptions about gay people," Redfield says.

McKeon recently announced his plans to retire in 2007. During his decade in the legislature, he successfully fought for a law against discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Another norm-breaker is state Sen. James Meeks, a Chicago minister who got elected as an Independent in 2003. He has since registered as a Democrat for the November election, but he's still seen as someone willing to challenge the party when he wants something. Last spring, he threatened to run for governor as an Independent unless Blagojevich promised more money for education. He got his way.

Meeks also could be seen as someone who paved the way for candidates like Wallace.

On paper, Wallace appears to differ from many who live in the southern corner of Cook County and the northeast corner of Will County. A majority in that region voted Democratic for governor, president and U.S. senator in the past two elections.

Yet Wallace says he found pockets of black Republicans, "people who don't want to call themselves Republicans because it's become such a dirty word in

the black community, so they call themselves Independents."

Potential voters often reflect the stereotypical belief about African Americans — if they vote, they're likely to vote straight down the Democratic ticket.

"We vote for the Democratic Party without looking," Wallace says. "A blind vote is political suicide. You need to know [whom] you're voting for and why you're voting for that person."

That's partially why he's running for office on the GOP ticket — "So that black folks don't feel like they're the only ones."

His one criticism of the GOP is that it overlooks Democratic districts. "They say, 'Oh, it's heavily Democratic. We can't win.' And so we don't put any money in. That's a defeatist attitude."

The state GOP has pitched in to help Wallace campaign against Crotty. State Board of Elections records show Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson of Greenville donated \$5,000, and former Sen. Steve Rauschenberger of Elgin contributed \$3,350. That helped Wallace raise more than \$17,000 in the first half of the year, but he spent nearly all of it. He had less than \$500 available at the end of June.

Crotty spent \$10,000 more than her opponent and reported still having \$127,402 available at the end of June. She received sizable donations, including \$10,000 from the Illinois Education Association.

Crotty says her Senate district appears diverse with very different economies in the 37th and 38th House districts, but the common issues of property taxes, transportation and education funding transcend the divisions.

She adds that she has never taken her job for granted and didn't even realize the Republicans wanted her seat.

"I don't care if it's a Republican or Democratic district," she says. "I call my voters my 'Fred and Ethels.' They just go to work. They're not political. They come out and vote, but they may have never needed to call my office for anything."

"I'm hoping that Fred and Ethel will have me back." □

Bethany Carson can be reached at [capitolbureau@aol.com](mailto:capitolbureau@aol.com).

# BRIEFLY

Photograph by James E. Appleby, copyright University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## PEST WATCH

### **Emerald ash borer beetle reaches state**

**T**he Illinois Department of Agriculture aims to save the state's millions of ash trees from the latest destructive Asian beetle. The first sighting of the emerald ash borer — in Kane County in June — was followed by two more a month later in the North Shore suburbs of Wilmette and Evanston.

The federal government will provide the state with \$7.6 million in emergency funding to try to stop the spread of the half-inch, metallic green beetle that has destroyed 20 million ash trees in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Ontario, Canada. The state has an estimated 130 million ash trees worth \$3 billion, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

In mid-July, the state ag agency quarantined a 51-square-mile area in Kane County. The order bars the removal of ash wood from the area, a three-and-one-half-mile radius around the home east of Lily Lake where the beetle was found. Adult beetles fly just one-half mile per year from where they hatch, but wood from destroyed trees can travel hundreds of miles in a short time. Firewood from other states is likely the way the emerald ash borer arrived in Illinois.

The adult beetles, which do little harm to trees, are dead now, having finished their life cycle in August. The destructive force of the species comes from the larvae that



*The emerald ash borer is about a half-inch long, but the hole in a tree's bark that the Asian beetle emerges from is a quarter of that size. The invasive pest was found in Illinois in June.*

tunnel under the bark of ash trees, cutting off nutrients. The adults leave a distinctive D-shaped hole in the bark as they exit in May and June.

Under state law, when a tree dies, it is the responsibility of the landowner to dispose of it properly. That can cost more than \$1,000 a tree, says Jeff Squibb, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Agriculture. He says the agency is looking for public money, perhaps a combination of local, state and federal funds, to help homeowners

with the expense. The money from the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be used to conduct surveys of trees in northeastern Illinois and pay for educational campaigns.

That procedure worked in containing the previous beetle that threatened the state's trees. The state ag department lifted the last quarantine on the Asian long-horned beetle, an import from China, in July (see *Illinois Issues*, July/August 2005, page 13), just as it was gearing up to fight the emerald ash borer.

*Beverley Scobell*

## QUOTABLES

“This effort reflects not merely an ignorance of the law, but complete and utter contempt of the law.”

*Zaldwaynaka “Z” Scott, Gov. Rod Blagojevich’s first inspector general, in a 2004 report made public by a July article in the Chicago Tribune. According to the Tribune, “The report said Blagojevich’s patronage office — known formally as the governor’s Office of Intergovernmental Affairs — played a key role with compliant agency officials in subverting state laws that give veterans a preference in getting state employment and ban political considerations in hiring for most state jobs.”*

“I have a one-word answer for you: absurd. Here’s another word: ridiculous, ludicrous. It’s just ridiculous.”

*Gov. Rod Blagojevich in a July Chicago Tribune article responding to allegations in a suit filed by Maynard Crossland, former director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Crossland “alleges that he lost his post after refusing orders from Gov. Rod Blagojevich to fire Republicans from jobs that were supposed to be free of political influence.”*

**For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>**



## GROW YOUR OWN

### Project helps low-income areas recruit teachers



*Grow Your Own Teachers recruit LaShonda Brown*

In return for help with her tuition, LaShonda Brown says her North Lawndale neighborhood in Chicago will gain a teacher who can relate to the students.

Brown is a participant in Grow Your Own Teachers Illinois, a program designed to help poor communities recruit potential teachers from their own ranks. This fall, the Illinois State Board of Education will begin to release \$3 million in funding lawmakers allocated for the initiative.

Consortia of community organizations, local school districts and area colleges are in the midst of making grant requests to the state board. Five of them are Chicago-based, a sixth is in the south suburbs and others are in East St. Louis, Rockford, Springfield and the Quad Cities.

The grants, up to \$2.5 million for each consortium, will pay coordinators' salaries and cover scholarships and tuition loans that can be waived after a participant has taught five years in a local school. About 400 potential teachers are expected to apply this academic year.

"This is an Illinois innovative solution to what are far-reaching national problems," says Anne Hallett, director of the program. "Its goals are to create a pipeline of teachers of color, to develop teachers who have a cultural connection to the children and to combat the high rate of teacher turnover in low-income neighborhoods."

A 35-year-old single parent with three teens, Brown says she had trouble communicating with her children's teachers. "They didn't talk to me kindly. I felt like I was a stereotype. If I was a teacher and I came across a young parent, I'd do more to be encouraging."

Brown says because of tuition costs, she hadn't considered a teaching career before learning of Grow Your Own through ACORN, the organizing group in the North Lawndale consortium. Since then, she has taken a part-time job assisting other applicants. "Sometimes people don't know where to turn to or don't have the support they need to go back to school."

Now, Brown says, she often thinks about becoming a teacher. "I'm picturing what my class will be like. I'm picturing how my room will be decorated and how I'll arrange the chairs. I just have so much I want to give to the children."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*

## UPDATES

- Two Illinois towns — Mattoon and Tuscola — along with a pair in Texas are finalists for a \$1 billion FutureGen project that will convert coal to cleaner-burning hydrogen gas (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2005, page 14).
- Average gas prices in Chicago hit a high of \$3.29 in late July, and hovered near that mark in mid-August after war erupted between Israel and Hezbollah and a malfunctioning crude oil pipeline in Alaska was shut down (see *Illinois Issues*, May, page 18).
- Gov. Rod Blagojevich used his executive authority to bypass the legislature on stem cell research for a second year, announcing Illinois will award \$5 million for stem cell research in fiscal year 2007 (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2005, page 8, and March 2005, page 22).
- Low levels of tritium, a radioactive byproduct of nuclear power generation, leaked into the groundwater of the now-closed Zion nuclear plant (see *Illinois Issues*, May, page 8).

## POLLUTING PILLS

### Drug disposal program helps environment

Pharmaceuticals make life easier and account for billions of dollars in the national economy. However, research over the past decade indicates that the chemicals in prescription pills and over-the-counter health products flushed into the waste water or thrown in the trash are changing the ecology.

"It's an emerging issue I'm hoping we can deal with," says Rep. Karen May, who chairs the House Environmental Health Committee. "It is important because everything that goes in the landfill or [is] flushed down the drain gets into our water, into our air."

The Highland Park Democrat says she may fold a plan for statewide drug disposal into a measure she introduced in the spring session to recycle expensive, unopened cancer drugs. That bill is modeled after a similar program in Wisconsin, which also holds prescription drug drop-offs to keep chemicals out of the Great Lakes.

For the past two years, the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago and the Cook County Sheriff's Office, along with the Chicago Police Department and Attorney General Lisa Madigan's office, have sponsored efforts in Cook and DuPage counties to collect unwanted and outdated prescription drugs. This spring's drive gathered more than 1,600 pounds of prescription and over-the-counter drugs from 1,330 citizens, according to the Cook County Sheriff's Office.

Early studies show that antibiotics and antidepressants released in waste water may be toxic to some aquatic species and have adverse effects on humans.

"The pharmaceuticals are not degraded by the sewage treatment process," says Richard Lanyon, general superintendent of the Chicago area water reclamation district.

The difficult logistics of holding a pharmaceutical collection is one reason the program has yet to be tried statewide, says Kathleen Quinn, policy adviser to the state attorney general. A number of drop-off sites must be arranged, staffed and advertised. Each one must have at least one police officer and a patrol car present to provide security for transporting the drugs to a central site to be incinerated.

*Beverly Scobell*



## SUMMER DOCKET

### Feds shine spotlight on governor's hiring

State employees felt the heat this summer as federal investigators probed more than a dozen state agencies.

Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's legal counsel William Quinlan ordered at least 15 agencies to turn in personnel lists and related records in response to a federal investigation into hiring fraud, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

More light was shed in a letter from U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald to Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, which she released. Fitzgerald wrote that federal investigators were looking into "very serious allegations of endemic hiring fraud" within the Blagojevich Administration.

Meanwhile, the *Tribune* revealed the governor's then-inspector general, Zalwaynaka "Z" Scott, cited his patronage chief Joseph Cini last year for manipulating hiring. According to the report, Cini disregarded state law by favoring politically sponsored job applicants over veterans.

The administration responded that there have been a "few bad apples" among the 57,000 employees, and the inspector general's report serves as an example of how the administration helped "ferret out this wrongdoing."



U.S. Attorney  
Patrick Fitzgerald

Bethany Carson



## Borrowed time

Prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald, who earlier this year convicted a former Republican governor, is now immersed in investigations of departments overseen by Illinois' top Democrats: the governor and the mayor of Chicago. But he may not be the U.S. attorney who wraps up those probes. Fitzgerald has served almost a year beyond expiration of his initial four-year term.

Fitzgerald went to work as the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Illinois on September 1, 2001. Within weeks, the former New York prosecutor was drawn into the investigation of the 9/11 attacks because of his experience prosecuting terrorists with al Qaeda links.

Then-U.S. Sen. Peter Fitzgerald, who is not related to his nominee, went to the FBI to ask for names of the nation's best federal prosecutors (see *Illinois Issues*, September 2003, page 14). Patrick Fitzgerald, who had no Illinois ties, was on then-FBI Director Louis Freeh's shortlist.

Fitzgerald took over major cases from Scott Lassar, his predecessor, including the one that led to the corruption convictions of former Gov. George Ryan, more than 30 of his administration's employees and several of his top advisers. The probe into the exchange of commercial driver's licenses for bribes that began in 1998 has resulted in nearly 80 convictions.

Fitzgerald also cracked down on corruption in Chicago City Hall. He launched a probe into Chicago's Hired Truck Program that already has produced more than 40 convictions.

His name recognition surged nationally in 2003, when U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft pulled Fitzgerald to Washington, D.C., to investigate exposure of CIA undercover agent Valerie Plame. The probe led to the indictment of the vice president's chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby, and the imprisonment of *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller, who refused to testify. This summer, while visiting Chicago, President George W. Bush praised Fitzgerald's handling of that case, but was mum about whether he plans to reappoint him as a federal prosecutor.

Fitzgerald's pending trials, which he isn't guaranteed to see through to the end, includes a Hamas member charged with funneling money to terrorists. And he will have gotten a good start on new public corruption cases, including the indictments of Niles Mayor Nicholas Blase and James Picardi, a former operations manager for Chicago Public Schools.

Meanwhile, Fitzgerald is scrutinizing hiring practices in Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration, as well as those in Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's office. This summer, the federal prosecutor scored the convictions of former Chicago City Clerk James Laski for taking bribes and city patronage chief Robert Sorich for getting campaign workers public jobs. And a letter Fitzgerald wrote Attorney General Lisa Madigan described his probe into "allegedly illegal hiring" in Blagojevich's administration. He wrote in the letter, dated June 20, "Our investigation has now implicated multiple state agencies and departments and we have developed a number of credible witnesses."

In addition, newspapers are reporting that Stuart Levine is cooperating with officials. He's under indictment for alleged kickbacks and schemes to defraud the government while serving as a member of the Teachers' Retirement System Board and the Illinois Health Facilities Board. Prosecutors may question Levine on the actions of "Public Official A" cited in indictments that relate to steering teacher pension investments in exchange for campaign donations.

Blagojevich has not been accused of wrongdoing and has denied being "Public Official A." In the Operation Safe Road investigation, former Gov. Ryan turned out to be "Public Official A."

The Editors

## TIMELINE

### Fitzgerald's convictions

#### July 12

Michael Tristano, former Republican House Leader Lee Daniels' chief of staff, was sentenced to a year and a day in prison for telling staff to do campaign work on state time.

#### July 6

Robert Sorich was convicted for running a scam to promote political hiring out of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's office.

#### June 14

James Laski, Chicago's former city clerk, was sentenced to two years in prison for taking bribes to steer city business to friends.

#### May 19

Samuel Stillo, former assistant mayor of Berwyn, pleaded guilty to bribery after the FBI caught him on video offering a payoff.

#### April 17

Former Gov. George Ryan was convicted of corruption for helping friends get millions in state contracts in exchange for vacations and cash. His sentencing is scheduled for September 6.

#### September 2005

David Radler, the *Chicago Sun-Times* publisher, pleaded guilty to participating in a scam to bleed more than \$30 million from the newspaper's parent company. Hollinger International head Conrad Black, who pleaded not guilty, is set to go to trial in March 2007.

#### August 2005

Attorneys Joseph Cari and Steven Loren pleaded guilty. They were associates of Stuart Levine, a former member of the Teachers' Retirement System Board and the Illinois Health Facilities Planning Board who is under indictment for kickback and investment-steering schemes related to both state entities.

#### August 2005

Shirley McMayon, the Chicago Park District's former natural resources director, pleaded guilty to steering \$8 million in district work for payoffs.

#### July 2005

Don Tomczak, head of the Chicago Water Department, pleaded guilty to accepting bribes.

#### June 2005

Builder Jacob Kiferbaum pleaded guilty to extortion in a scam he ran with Levine to force Naperville-based Edward Hospital to hire his company.

#### April 2005

White supremacist Matthew Hale was sentenced to 40 years in prison for trying to hire an undercover FBI plant to murder U.S. District Judge Joan Lefkow.

#### June 2004

Michael Segal, the owner of Near North Insurance Brokerage Inc., was convicted of bilking a company trust fund of more than \$20 million. He was later sentenced to more than 10 years in prison.

#### March 2004

Khaled Abdel-Latif Dumeisi, an Oak Lawn publisher of a small Arabic-language newspaper, was sentenced to nearly four years in prison for failing to give notice that he was an Iraqi intelligence agent.

#### August 2003

Enaam Arnaout, head of a suburban Muslim charity, was sentenced to 11 years in prison after pleading guilty to sending charity donations intended for orphans to Bosnian and Chechen Islamic fighters. Fitzgerald had sought to convict him for helping al Qaeda.

#### August 2002

Cicero Town President Betty Loren-Maltese was convicted with six others for skimming almost \$12 million from the west suburb through an insurance scam. She was later sentenced to more than eight years in prison.

#### May 2002

William Hanhardt, a retired chief of detectives in Chicago, was sentenced to almost 16 years in prison for leading a mob-connected operation that stole \$5 million in jewels.

#### May 2001

Four associates of Osama bin Laden were found guilty on more than 300 charges related to the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa that killed 224 people and injured another 4,000.

*The Editors*

## Illinois is ahead in welfare reform

Illinois' plan to give welfare recipients financial incentives to get jobs appears to have worked, making a recent federal revision of welfare-to-work rules less painful than it will be for most states. But complying with the regulations that will take effect this fall promises to be burdensome, nonetheless, according to the spokesman for the state Department of Human Services.

The changes, which stem from efforts to reduce the federal deficit, are estimated to cost the states \$1.7 billion.

When the welfare-to-work reforms were created a decade ago, states were expected to show a 50 percent drop in the number of welfare users. The new rules shift the comparison point from 1995 to 2005, effectively increasing the number of recipients states are expected to move off the welfare rolls.

States are expected to reduce by 90 percent the number of assisted families with two potential wage earners.

"Ninety percent is an impossible requirement for most states," says Jack Tweedie, a welfare reform analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures. He notes that under the old guidelines states were able to count families who continued to get assistance, but were enrolled in programs to help them function without welfare. "In setting the requirement, they [federal government officials] didn't think through the enormous challenges some of these families face."

Illinois has reduced its caseload by more than 80 percent since welfare-to-work went into effect, according to the Illinois Department of Human Services. More than half the states haven't yet met the 50-percent reduction mark under the old rules. "There's huge pressure on 17 states that have to at least double work participation rates," Tweedie says, noting that 12 states will have to triple the number who get work instead of aid.

He says states might improve their shot at meeting the new goals by following Illinois' lead in running programs that continue to provide some assistance to the newly employed. Under Illinois' Work Pays, benefits are cut \$1 for every \$3 earned.

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*



## LET THE GAMES BEGIN Sparta complex opens

A shuttered coal mine and a far-fetched idea became a potential economic boon for southwest Illinois this summer.

The \$50-million World Shooting & Recreational Complex in rural Sparta is expected to create 250 jobs, attract thousands of tourists and generate \$10 million in revenue from the annual Amateur Trapshooting Association's Grand American World Championships.

The complex can accommodate other activities throughout the year with 120 field traps and multiple ranges for sporting clays, skeet, archery, rifles and pistols. The site includes 1,000 campsites, a vendor mall, a restaurant and a multipurpose center.

It's been a road long traveled, said Sparta Mayor Randy Bertetto on opening day. The effort was launched during former Republican Gov. George Ryan's administration. Joel Brunsvold, retired director of the state Department of Natural Resources and a former member of the General Assembly, led the Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus and kept the project on the front burner.

Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich said the critical moment for the complex came during the record overtime session of 2004 when lawmakers approved the state's \$29-million contribution despite a tight state budget.

"We had to fight for this. This was not an easy sell," Blagojevich said on opening day.

The complex was constructed with \$31.5 million from the state's Capital Development Board, \$10 million in road improvements from the Illinois Department of Transportation and \$8 million through local bonds that will be repaid over 20 years. Blagojevich said he supported the project as a way to promote economic development and celebrate tradition. "We built it, and now they will come."

Opening day attracted about 1,100 shooters, but many slept as far as an hour away because there are so few hotel rooms in Sparta, which has 4,500 residents. The mayor said at least two more hotels are planned for the area, with room to grow.

State Sen. Dave Luechtefeld, an Okawville Republican, said, "The thing we hope is that we get this thing busy a lot of weekends rather than just a few weekends. That then draws other things into the area."

The next wave of tourists will go to Sparta for a shooting event next month. *Bethany Carson*

## Chief judge's suit going to trial

A defamation suit pitting the state's top judge against a suburban Chicago newspaper may finally come to trial this fall.

In 2004, Chief Justice Robert Thomas sued the *Kane County Chronicle*, its managing editor and writer Bill Page after Page wrote several columns accusing Thomas of trading his Supreme Court vote for political favors.

Page's columns centered on the case of Meg Gorecki, a former Kane County state's attorney. While in private practice in 1998, Gorecki left answering machine messages suggesting someone could get a government job by making a campaign contribution to the chairman of the county board. Gorecki later defeated the incumbent state's attorney in the Republican primary.

Subsequently, in a complaint filed against Gorecki with the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission in connection with the taped suggestion, one panel recommended a six-month suspension for Gorecki, another suggested two months and the commission's administrator argued for a year. The disagreement put the case before the Supreme Court, which has final say over attorney disciplinary matters.

That's when Page wrote his first column charging Thomas was "pushing hard" to disbar Gorecki. According to court documents, Supreme Court press secretary Joseph Tybor called the paper that day and said Page's allegations were false. Page responded with an e-mail to Tybor's assistant suggesting she warn the court of the "nightmare of bad publicity they'll be facing if Thomas is allowed to influence their decisions."

Page then wrote a column in which he quoted anonymous sources saying Thomas was "out for blood" and "out to nail [Gorecki]."

Then-Chief Justice Mary Ann McMorrow penned an opinion splitting the difference by suspending Gorecki for four months. Thomas says the decision was unanimous. Gorecki served her suspension, finished her term and chose not to run for re-election.

Page then wrote that Thomas' objectivity was "highly suspect" and charged a "political shimmy-shammy" in which the justice agreed to suspension in exchange for Republican Party backing of a favored judicial candidate.

After demanding a retraction — which the paper did not publish — Thomas hired Chicago trial lawyer Joseph Power Jr., the man credited with uncovering the licenses-for-bribes scandal that eventually led to the downfall of former Gov. George Ryan. Thomas sued in Kane County Circuit Court.

All of the circuit's judges recused themselves, so Cook County Circuit Judge Donald O'Brien Jr. is presiding over the case.

A circuit judge wrote that Page's columns "have the effect of associating [Thomas] with allegations of deception, lack of integrity, and dishonesty," three of the elements required to prove defamation under Illinois law.

Proving defamation can be difficult for anyone, but the bar is set especially high for individuals in the public eye. Under the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 1964 decision in *New York Times v. Sullivan*, public figures must show that falsehoods were published with "actual malice" or a "reckless disregard for the truth." Thomas contends that everything Page wrote after Tybor's first complaint meets that burden.

The case could go to trial later this year, but Page won't be writing about Thomas anymore. Last month, he announced he was leaving the *Chronicle*.

"It's time to move on," Page wrote in his final column, adding that there was no truth to the rumor he was "banished" over the lawsuit. "Not only is this incorrect, but it's also somewhat offensive."



*State Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Thomas*

*Brian Mackey*

*Statehouse bureau*

*Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*



## Could court decision mean early remap?

**I**llinois is one of a few states with the practical ability to use the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in the Texas remap case as an excuse to reshape congressional districts at mid-decade. But a national expert on redistricting who is a former Illinois political science professor says several developments would have to occur to make that happen.

Democrats hold majorities in both chambers of the General Assembly, making a remap politically possible in Illinois, which is one of 31 states with no explicit prohibition on congressional redistricting between U.S. Census decades. Democrats also control the governor's office and the state's two U.S. Senate seats and hold a slight majority in the congressional delegation.

Is it worth the effort to tinker?

National Democrats have put some pressure on Illinois legislative leaders to look at congressional redistricting, but in mid-August neither House Speaker Michael Madigan, who is chairman of the state Democratic Party, nor Senate President Emil Jones Jr. had interest in doing so, say spokespeople for the two Chicago Democrats.

"The question has been asked, [and declined] but after the '06 election, the political winds might shift," says Michael McDonald, an assistant political science professor at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., who is in the midst of researching states' redistricting laws. "What might happen after the election — if there is a one- or two-seat majority [in Congress] for one

party or the other — [is that] the national leaders might come back to Illinois because the stakes would be all that much higher."

After the 2000 U.S. Census, Illinois Democrats gave their party an edge with the congressional map they ironed out with Republicans. Whether that advantage, now at 10-9, remains after the November election is dependent on results in a few key districts, including the 17th, where longtime incumbent Democrat Lane Evans of Rock Island resigned after the primary because of failing health.

The existing congressional map "looks good on paper," says McDonald, a former assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Springfield. "But it's not the best map Democrats could have. The state is much bluer than the Republican congressional delegation wants to make it out to be."

But, for now, Democrats have no reason to play with the map, says McDonald, who wrote *Illinois Issues'* remap primer, "The ultimate political puzzle," which appeared in the magazine in March 2001 (see page 30). "At the rate things are going, Democrats will have unified control until 2011 — unless [Gov. Rod] Blagojevich really screws up."

Some states followed Texas' lead. Among them are three that drew new state legislative district maps. Georgia's faces a state high court challenge, which likely is what would happen in this state. The Illinois Constitution pegs state legislative remaps to Census decades.

Maureen Foertsch McKinney

### QUOTABLE

“Seems like somebody has gone overboard. Their time could be spent better doing other things, like providing security for the country.”

*An organizer of Clinton's Apple and Pork Festival, Larry Buss, to The New York Times in a July article citing examples of "unusual" places on the Department of Homeland Security's National Asset Database, which is used to help determine how much cities and states get in antiterrorism grants. The department's inspector general released a report criticizing a large number of sites "whose criticality is not readily apparent." Indiana, the 15th-most-populous state, had the most assets at 8,591 listed in the database, while Illinois, the fifth-most-populous, had 2,058 listed in addition to the Clinton festival.*

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Doctoral assistant Leina Joseph

## SOYBEANS

### Research offers potential relief

Crop scientists at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign have given seed companies a soybean plant that doesn't produce the protein that causes allergic reactions in some people.

"We wanted to get it out as quickly as possible," says Theodore Hymowitz, emeritus professor of plant genetics.

He says availability is more important than the dollar value of patents. With soy proteins in thousands of products sold around the world, even the small number of people, mostly infants, affected by an allergic reaction counts in the millions.

Of the 15 proteins in soybeans known to cause allergies, one is dominant and causes about 65 percent of the reactions, which can range from skin irritation to gastrointestinal discomfort to breathing problems. Unlike an allergic reaction to peanuts that can be fatal, soybean allergies are mostly uncomfortable, but can be distressing for babies. About 25 percent of baby formula and baby food contains soy products, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Hymowitz and doctoral assistant Leina Joseph screened the germplasm collection at the U of I — 16,266 different kinds of soybeans — to find two of Chinese origin that have a mutated, nonfunctional protein. The team produced a small amount of seed, which they have made available to seed companies.

So far, eight companies are involved in the next step: introducing the allergy-free trait into established soybean lines.

The research was conducted under a federal grant in collaboration with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service's Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis.

Beverly Scobell

## AG ED

### Farming is more than corn and beans

Agribusiness is the state's economic engine, and policymakers have made a couple of moves aimed at preparing the next generation to keep it running.

A second high school focused on agricultural education is planned, not in the cornfields, but in the middle of the state's largest city. And, in June, Gov. Rod Blagojevich signed legislation that made the Future Farmers of America part of the curriculum available to all students in schools that offer ag education.

"Agriculture is a big part of our economy and the No. 1 industry in the state," says Sen. John Sullivan, who sponsored the legislation in his chamber. A farmer himself, the Rushville Democrat says he knows from personal experience how important FFA is to the secondary school learning environment.

The state's only high school devoted to agricultural sciences is located on Chicago's South Side. It hosts the state's largest FFA chapter. All 589 students are members, says Lucille Shaw, a teacher at Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences. The new ag high school, suggested for East Garfield Park on the city's West Side, is part of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley's plan to build two dozen new schools.

"Look at the success of the ag school and its graduates, its success in preparing its students for college," says Marc Schulman, chairman of the ag high school's advisory board and president of Eli's Cheesecake. "It's a great model."

Three-quarters of FFA students go on to college, and the Chicago ag magnet school ranks fifth in the city for students continuing their education.

Schulman is pushing for a third campus on the North Side. State-owned land that housed a former mental health facility is near Wilbur Wright Community College, which, in conjunction with the University of Illinois, already has options for students in the agricultural and food industries.

Effective January 2007, the new law clarifies the state school code to recognize FFA as an integral part of a three-pronged approach to learning: classroom training, supervised experience in the field and FFA activities.

"FFA is the reward part of the learning process," says James Craft, executive secretary for the Illinois FFA. Students create projects for local, state and national competitions.

"We found that in some instances schools were charging activity fees for FFA events, like they do for sports or the chess club," says Ronald Reische, director of agriculture education for the Illinois State Board of Education. In effect, the new law codifies the federal charter of the 78-year-old organization, making it easier for students to participate.

More than 26,000 students, grades 9 through 12, were enrolled in agriculture programs in the 2004-2005 school year. More than 16,000 were FFA members. The state has added \$1 million to the ag education budget since FY 2005. But the number of farmers and children of farmers continues to drop, says Sullivan.

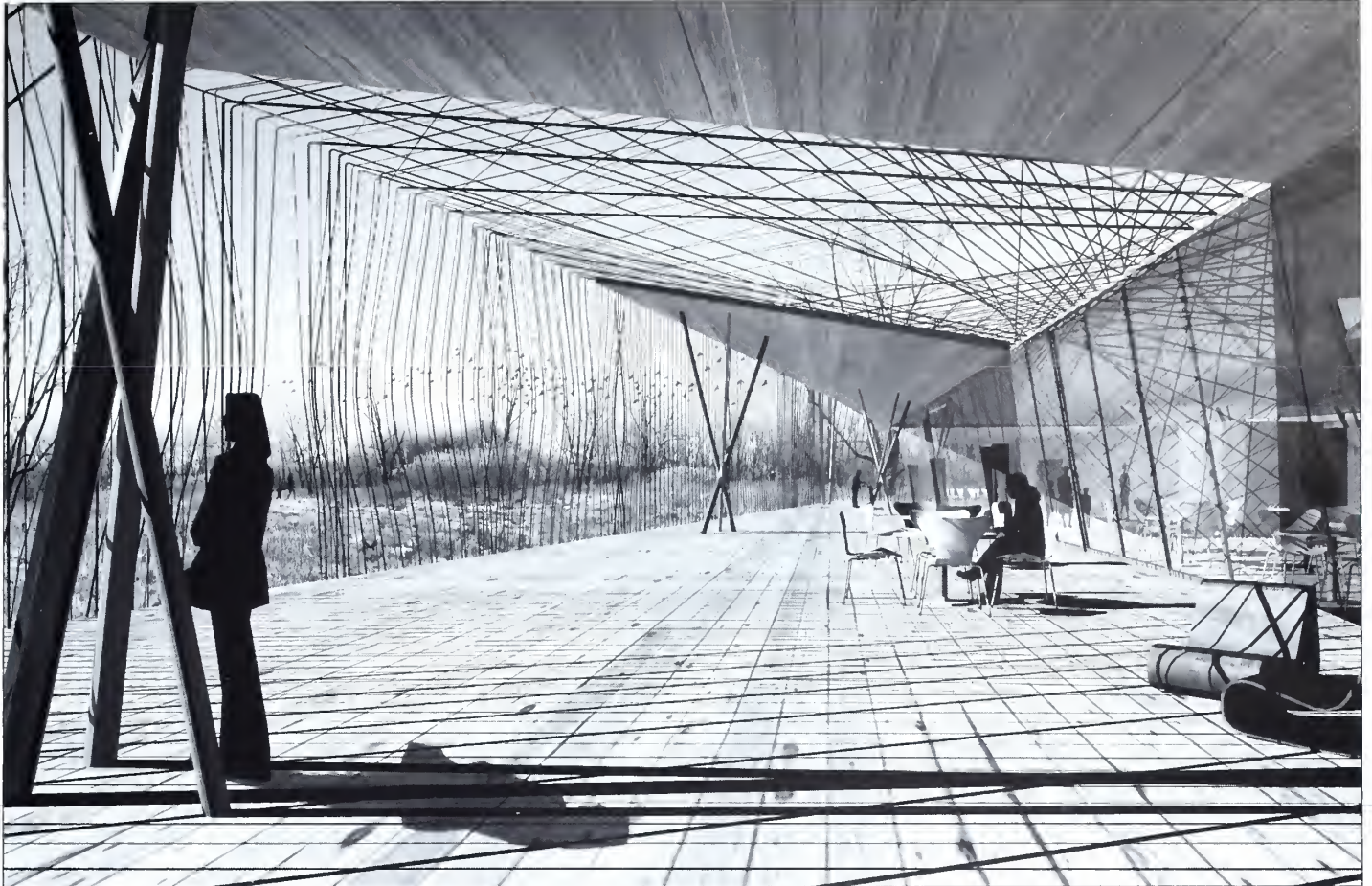
"We need to broaden our horizon and our definition of what agriculture is and try to get more people involved in the many different facets of it."

Beverly Scobell



An FFA state horticulture career development event





The design of the porch at the Ford Calumet Environmental Center emulates a bird's nest. The project is one of several under development included in an exhibit on "green" architecture in the Chicago area, which begins this month at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago.

## GREEN ARCHITECTURE

### Museum features natural designs

An environmental center design inspired by birds is cited as an example of a good investment by government, according to a recent study conducted by the University of Illinois at Chicago.

The center also will be featured in an exhibit beginning this month at the Museum of Contemporary Art that explores local contributions to sustainable architecture, part of Mayor Richard Daley's effort to make Chicago the "greenest city in America."

The Ford Calumet Environmental Center is one of seven projects in development that are featured in *Sustainable Architecture in Chicago: Works in Progress*. The show runs from September 9 through January 6, 2007. It complements another exhibit, *Massive Change: The Future of Global Design*, which looks at socially responsible approaches to land use, construction materials and energy-efficient practices. The projects located in and around Chicago highlight solar- and wind-powered energy system designs.

Indeed, a porch designed by Studio Gang Architects for the environmental center at the Calumet Open Space Reserve in south Chicago expresses a new attitude. Inspired by the nature of the area, a migratory bird route that is home to several

endangered species, the design uses a bird's nest as a metaphor. The porch, which is supported and shaded by a "nest-like" mesh structure, has the dual purpose of maximizing ventilation to help heat and cool the interior and of protecting birds from injuring themselves by flying into glass.

The building, which will be constructed using some of the discarded materials abundant in the industrial region, is scheduled to open in 2007. The city invested \$7.5 million in the center, which will educate visitors about the cultural, industrial and ecological history of the area.

"From my conservative analysis, because there seems to be an unmet demand in Chicago for nature experiences, building this environmental center will generate a lot of visitorship and a lot of social gain," says Dan McGrath, an economics professor in the Institute for Environmental Science and Policy and author of the UIC study.

The exhibit also highlights the Riverwalk Renovation, which includes a home for the city's Green Market, and an "urban ecosystem" master plan for the city of Aurora.

Beverly Scobell



# LEFT BEHIND **Young black and male**

*Neither an economic boom  
nor poverty programs had much effect*

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Analysis by Robert Joiner

As many Illinoisans sing the praises of black men like Barack Obama, it's good to remember the thousands of African-American males whose splintered lives stand in sharp contrast to the high-achieving junior senator from Illinois. Stunted by low school attendance, widespread unemployment and disproportionate rates of incarceration, these men are frequent fixtures on street corners, idle, aimless and as disconnected from mainstream society as a dead cell phone.

The plight of such men has been the focus of decades of research, but three studies released this year delved much deeper into the problems than most. *Punishment and Inequality in America* by Bruce Western for the Russell Sage Press sheds fresh light on the harmful social and economic consequences of this nation's mass incarceration policy. *Black Males Left Behind*, edited by Ronald B. Mincy for the Urban Institute Press, explores how and why the plight of poorly educated black men didn't improve during

the economic boom of the 1990s.

*Reconnecting Disadvantaged Young Men* by Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer and Paul Offner for the Urban Institute Press, seeks to offer policymakers a road map for boosting education and training opportunities for these men and helping them overcome barriers, such as prison records, that hurt their movement into the world of work.

Together, these studies depict inner cities as places where more than half of all black men do not complete high school, where 72 percent of black male dropouts in their 20s had no jobs in 2004 and where jails or prisons were the addresses of 21 percent of black men who were in their 20s and not in college in 2004.

These trends, researchers say, are occurring in part because of structural shifts in the economy. Factory jobs that were the economic lifeblood for the fathers and grandfathers of many of these men have vanished or moved to distant sites away from the urban core. Crime and drug

peddling have become substitutes for legitimate work for many of those left behind. They usually end up in prison and discover on their release that finding work as unskilled ex-cons is a lot harder than it used to be, some employment experts say. Life becomes a revolving door of crime, drugs, prison.

The dilemma of these men isn't made easier given that public programs to address poverty since the late '80s have focused almost exclusively on cutting welfare rolls and putting women to work. Mincy underscored that point in March, when he told a *New York Times* reporter the nation had invested \$50 billion to try to help women move from welfare to work, but "we are not even beginning to think about the men's problem on similar orders of magnitude."

If many of these findings and concerns are a revelation to Illinoisans, it's probably because they haven't been paying attention to earlier studies about their state. At the start of the new century, the highly



*Quintarius Weaver, an East St. Louis 17-year-old, attends Tomorrow's Builders Charter School, which teaches trades to former dropouts.*

regarded Chicago Alternative Schools Network — which tries to catch kids who fall through the cracks in traditional public schools — began sounding the alarm after commissioning a series of studies by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston. Among other things, researchers, led by Andrew Sum, found that government statistics only scratched the surface in revealing the depth of the economic depression among black men in Chicago and many other inner cities. Looking beyond official unemployment data, the researchers found that an astounding 44 percent of black male dropouts and 42 percent of black men between the ages of 55 and 64 were idle the entire year.

Others who have tried to call attention to the worsening plight of low-income men in Illinois include Illinois' U.S. Rep. Danny Davis, who has been holding forums on black males around the country since 2004. The Chicago Democrat has pushed legislation for demonstration

projects aimed at providing transitional housing and jobs for former prisoners, as well as support for children of incarcerated parents.

He notes that the poverty rate for black men in Chicago stood at 28 percent in 2000, higher than the rate for black men in all other major cities. In addition, Illinois' incarceration rate in 2001 was 1,889 per 100,000 for black men, compared to 251 per 100,000 for whites. At least one in four black males in Chicago has been looking for work and cannot find it, while the high school dropout rate for black males in Chicago schools rose to nearly 26 percent. If that sounds bad, consider the situation in East St. Louis, where recent dropout numbers are said to be twice those in Chicago.

The findings in the three new national studies, then, shouldn't surprise Illinois, home to 1.9 million blacks who make up about 15 percent of the population. Most of them live in Chicago, where they make up 36 percent of the city's population of roughly 2.8 million people. Other Illinois

communities that have relatively large black populations include East St. Louis, whose population of 31,000 is almost all black; Decatur, where 19.5 percent of the population of 80,000 is black; and Cairo, where 61 percent of the 3,600 residents are black.

Illinois' black male middle class is growing, but not nearly as fast as it needs to grow. Only about 13 percent of black men in the state are college graduates. Black men comprise about 6 percent of private sector managerial and professional jobs. These men (and women) have made strides in private sector work partly as a result of the push for broader economic opportunities for blacks during the affirmative action years of the 1960s and '70s.

It was during those years, a period when the economies in Illinois cities like East St. Louis were more robust, that black activists like Frank Smith fought hard to expand job opportunities for black men. Nowadays, he's leading a much quieter employment revolution, having traded





*Keith Antone Willis Sr., principal of the Tomorrow's Builders Charter School in East St. Louis, maintains an easy rapport with students.*

in his dashiki and afro haircut years ago for desk work as the job placement coordinator for East St. Louis Township. Smith scoffs at the widely held conservative viewpoint that many black men are idle because they simply do not want to work. He says such arguments overlook the structural barriers that stand in the way of employment for some of these men.

One common barrier, he says, is a public transportation system that doesn't always take low-income people where jobs are available. An example of that occurred in the Metro East area when Display Graphics, a manufacturing firm in Pontoon Beach, wanted to fill 300 job openings. For many blacks, a bus ride stood between them and those jobs. That's when Smith and a group of local officials leaned on public transit officials to provide bus service from downtown East St. Louis to the manufacturing plant.

This allowed men like Michael Adkins to find what was, for some, their first legitimate lines of work in years. A former

inmate who remains on probation with little genuine work experience during much of his adult life, Adkins was tired of hustling and felt lucky to earn \$6.50 an hour on the assembly line at the graphics plant.

"I had made bad choices," he says. "I used to rob, shoplift and engage in other crimes to support my habit."

Nowadays, Smith says, "Black folk are lost in a maze. If a guy's not employed, he's going to find other means to make a living — selling drugs, for example. It's like a lost generation out there. Many of them grew up as crack babies. Now the crack babies are the parents."

Even so, many of Illinois' unskilled black males are trying hard to stay out of jail. One is Darrell Johnson, who dropped out of school in the seventh grade and is just now seeing a little light in his life.

A handsome young man of 20, Johnson is dressed one Friday morning in baggy jeans, an Izod shirt and a signature silver medallion that glints under fluorescent

lighting inside Tomorrow's Builders Charter School, where he's a senior. He has been called on to head a discussion about leadership. He handles the assignment with such ease it's no wonder he hopes to attend college instead of pursue a career in the building trades once he completes his studies before December (the school hosts two graduations a year). The oldest of 10 children, Johnson grew up in a family where neither of his parents completed high school. Last year, one of his brothers was murdered, and over the years, he says, seven or eight of his close friends have either been killed or sent to prison.

For young men like Johnson, Tomorrow's Builders Charter School holds every troubled kid's wish. The school is part of the Emerson Park Development Corp., which has been working for two decades to rebuild a caring community through its school component, an impressive market-rate housing program and other initiatives.

"Being the oldest child in the family," Johnson says, "I've had to teach myself a





*Darrell Johnson, 20, grew up as the oldest of 10 children. Neither of his parents completed high school, a goal he is working toward.*

lot and make a lot of decisions, not all of them good. I'm grateful for the help and guidance I have received from people like Mr. Willis and others."

"Mr. Willis" is Keith Antone Willis Sr., the school's down-to-earth principal and mentor. He maintains an easy rapport with the students without losing his ability to command their respect, even as he shifts from academic jargon to street talk. As he lectured to a class one recent morning, he mentioned four principles that students needed to make it through the school: Maintain good attendance, maintain a good attitude, work hard and "Don't piss Mr. Willis off."

Willis and other school officials say the key to their success with the youngsters stems partly from providing the love, empathy and respect many of them yearn for and don't always receive at home and in traditional schools.

Illinois Rep. Wyvetter Younge, who has a well-earned reputation for espousing

forward-looking programs to uplift declining urban communities, says there needs to be more focus on preparing wayward black men for work in the construction trades and other vocations, more investments in drug rehabilitation and more after-school programs. The East St. Louis Democrat also wants to instill in black men an ownership culture to give them a stake in society and make them want to follow the rule of law.

Roger Walker Jr., head of the Illinois Department of Corrections, says Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration has set up some pilot programs to address job training, recidivism and drug abuse among Illinois prisoners. One is the program at Taylorville Correctional Center where inmates learn construction skills by building housing components for Habitat for Humanity as part of a partnership coordinated by Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. Another is the governor's Sheridan National Model Drug Prison and

Reentry Program that provides intensive drug treatment, along with vocational skills, in preparation for jobs once they leave prison. Walker says 69 percent of the state's inmates are behind bars for drug-related crimes. He adds that inmates in the Sheridan program have a reincarceration rate that's 50 percent lower than other groups and that more than half of Sheridan parolees are working full-time.

Still other suggestions come from free-market proponents like Ralph Conner, government relations manager for the Heartland Institute, a libertarian policy research organization in Chicago. He says it's time for blacks to do more to set up businesses in inner cities and take the Booker T. Washington philosophy into the prisons to teach inmates trades and character development to help reduce recidivism. "We have to let them know there's an American mainstream that they can enter if they prepare themselves academically and vocationally."



*Frank Smith, East St. Louis Township's job placement coordinator, says a lack of transportation keeps some men he counsels from getting jobs.*

In addition, Dr. Carl Bell, a psychiatrist who heads the Community Mental Health Council & Foundation on Chicago's South Side, says the problem of racism shouldn't be ignored in discussions about the way the system treats black males.

"There's this punitive approach that poor black people are flooded with risk factors in place of a belief that they're going to be OK," Bell says. "We need to start building corrective, protective services — the way programs like Boys and Girls Clubs and some churches are now doing — around youths, rather than dehumanizing and body slamming them."

There's no denying a lot more needs to be done, especially at the federal level, to keep men out of prison and help them become productive citizens, says Jack Wuest, executive director of Alternative Schools Network. Consider this: It costs

\$21,600 a year, on average, to house an adult in a Department of Corrections facility. Wuest says it costs on average about \$10,000 a year to educate a school dropout, most of whom need two years to earn their diplomas. Put another way, helping some offenders earn a high school or college diploma would be cheaper than giving them room and board in the pen. Some say that shift in funding priorities would mark a start toward improving the plight of unskilled black men.

Others argue that society can't solve a social problem as huge as the one afflicting dysfunctional black men by throwing money at it.

But why not give it a try for a change? Who knows how many Barack Obamas might emerge from the experiment?

*Robert Joiner is a former editorial writer and columnist for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.*

## The photographer

Award-winning photojournalist Max Bittle took the pictures that accompany our cover story. Bittle, a 21-year-old photojournalism major at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, also takes photographs for his hometown newspaper, the *Carterville Courier*. Bittle, a junior who had a seven-month internship at the *St. Petersburg Times*, has won honors in both the academic and professional arenas. In December, he was named winner of the National Press Photographer Association's Student Clip Contest. More of his work can be seen on his blog at [Maxbittle.blogspot.com](http://Maxbittle.blogspot.com).



# Campaign lifelines

While Republican legislative candidates risk drowning in Chicago's northwest suburbs, downstate Democrats swim in increasingly conservative waters

by Bethany Carson

State Rep. Kurt Granberg spells out one theme in this election season: "I feel like the island is sinking and there are sharks in the water."

Granberg is a 19-year incumbent Democrat representing a House district bound by three Republican-controlled districts. The state GOP hopes to take his seat on November 7, and it smells blood.

He made his own assessment in August while sitting outside a corner grocery that faces cornfields near his Carlyle home. Sweaty from four hours of campaigning door-to-door in a predominantly Republican village in Clinton County, he put a white towel over his shoulder. But Granberg, soaked from the 102-degree heat index, wasn't sweating the Republicans' campaign. "They can't beat me on the issues, so they're going to throw everything they can at me, including the kitchen sink."

About 300 miles north along the eight-lane highways of suburban Cook County, a 21-year incumbent Republican appears to be in the same boat. Rep. Terry Parke of Hoffman Estates represents an increasingly diverse area, but

he said coolly in July that he's not worried either because his voters know him.

Still, Parke and Granberg provide tempting bait for opposing parties in races that could narrow Democratic House Speaker Michael Madigan's 65-53 margin in a majority that party has held for 21 out of the last 23 years.

Over in the Senate, three incumbent seats in the northwest suburbs are considered potential catches for opposing parties. They include Republican freshman Sen. Cheryl Axley of Mount Prospect and Democratic Sen. Terry Link of Vernon Hills, his party's caucus chair.

Two other candidates for that chamber, Republican Suzanne Simpson and Democrat Michael Bond, both of Grayslake, are running for the seat vacated by long-time Sen. Adeline Geo-Karis, a Zion Republican.

Legislative leaders from both parties often target such open seats, helping their respective candidates with advice and cash. The Senate has five seats up for grabs. Senate Minority Leader Frank Watson of Greenville would need to win all of them to overturn Democratic Senate President Emil Jones' 32-27 majority. The House has four open seats in this election.

Photograph by Bethany Carson



State Rep. Kurt Granberg, a Carlyle Democrat, points to an area where a tornado tore through his district. He faces John Cavaletto, who got 45 percent of the vote in 2002.

House Minority Leader Tom Cross of Oswego would need to win them all and oust eight incumbents for control of that chamber.

A second tier of targets for both parties includes those incumbents, like Granberg and Parke, whose districts are changing. Political analysts say the Chicago suburbs have become precarious for Republicans, while downstate districts have become precarious for Democrats. For the GOP, that means attracting the increasingly diverse

population northwest of Chicago. For Democrats, that means satisfying an increasingly conservative and frustrated blue-collar constituency that has watched jobs relocate to nonunionized regions of the world.

Political scientist John Jackson of Southern Illinois University says the national decline in industrial jobs has weakened union representation and, thus, Democratic power downstate.

"The loss of United Mine Workers' strength in central and southern Illinois is absolutely critical," he says. "People who were strong-minded mine workers are now out of work, or [have] moved somewhere else or retired."

Conventional wisdom says constituents who used to vote consistently with their unions are now finding political guidance elsewhere, including culturally conservative church groups.

Issues such as gun control, abortion and gay marriage have always polarized downstate and Chicagoland voters, but regional battles over acquiring state resources for economic development have historically left the state politically divided, as well.

That often puts downstate Democrats in survival mode by voting in line with culturally conservative beliefs but supporting typically Democratic union interests, Jackson says. The litmus test

for whether Democrats can surmount the southern wave of conservatism — and escape a perception that legislative Democrats favor Chicago — may well be House District 107.

**That southern district** includes the rural counties of Clinton, Marion, Jefferson and a bit of Fayette. Positioned halfway between the Missouri and Indiana borders, the region historically has relied on agriculture, mining and oil, state prisons and tourism for survival. But in recent decades, the economy has shrunk. Granberg has represented the district through a few factory closings.

Citing the economy, and his vote to protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation, the state GOP argues Granberg has lost touch with his district.

Republicans also are hoping to build on momentum gained during a close race in 2002, when they slated John Cavaletto to challenge Granberg. Four years ago, Cavaletto, a retired educator, secured about 45.3 percent of the vote compared to Granberg's 54.7 percent. They will face off again this year.

So far, Cavaletto has followed the state Republican strategy, arguing voters are fed up with one-party control that benefits Chicago and ignores southern Illinois. He's getting support from House GOP Leader Cross and other area Republicans, Reps. Mike Bost of Murphysboro, Bill Mitchell of Forsyth and David Reis of Willow Hill, who stopped in Cavaletto's hometown of Salem to campaign for a southern Illinois jobs plan.

Cavaletto argues Granberg has contributed to an unfriendly business environment and has no real plan for job growth because he has supported Democratic Gov. Rod Blagojevich's fiscal policies, including fees levied on businesses.

"[Granberg's] been there for 20 years, and I don't know of any major plants that's come in here with him," Cavaletto says. "I'm not blaming him for businesses leaving, but I just wonder how much he's done to protect those businesses staying here."

A similar accusation appeared in a published letter to the editor of the local Centralia newspaper, causing Granberg to laugh. "What they want to do is make my name Kurt Madigan-Blagojevich."

## Ebb and flow

**House District 93** in rural west central Illinois is up for grabs after 17-year incumbent Republican Rep. Art Tenhouse of Liberty announced his retirement this summer.

That race had been one of the hottest contests until mid-August, when the Democratic candidate dropped out. Former Quincy Mayor Chuck Scholz withdrew from the race because of serious illness. "Right now I'm in the most important campaign I've ever embarked on," Scholz told the *Quincy Herald-Whig* the day he announced his need to focus on his health.

The announcement was made shortly before *Illinois Issues* went to press. Democratic chairs of each county central committee had until September 1 to nominate a new candidate.

House Republican campaign spokesman David Dring says Scholz was a serious contender against the GOP nominee Jil Tracy of Mount Sterling, and his departure is likely to dim that party's spotlight on the race.

The agricultural area extending east of the Mississippi River leans Republican, but the GOP experienced an upset when incumbent Sen. John Sullivan, a Rushville Democrat, snagged a surprise win in 2002 over Senate Republican Caucus Chair Laura Kent Donahue of Quincy.

Tracy is serving the remainder of Tenhouse's term. At the end of June, she reported raising \$23,250. (Counting party contributions, Scholz had more than \$32,500 on hand by the end of June.)

Tracy is a lawyer who has worked for former Republican Attorney General Jim Ryan and Democratic Attorney General Lisa Madigan. She also served as Mount Sterling's city attorney and was appointed by former Gov. Jim Edgar to the Juvenile Corrections Board.

Republicans hope her family connections to a major employer in the area, Mount Sterling-based DOT Foods distribution company, will appeal to local business owners, Dring says.

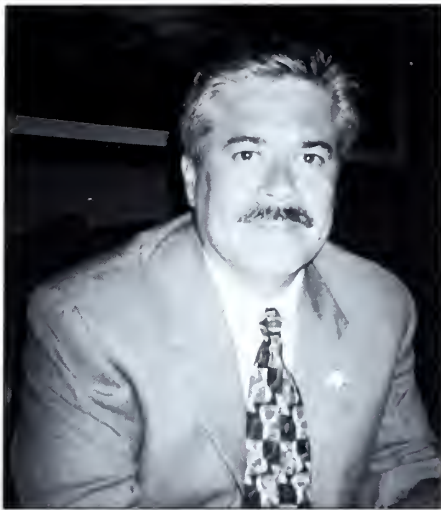
Her campaign echoes the GOP focus on fiscal responsibility. She released an economic plan that would offer tax credits as an incentive to create jobs, which resembles a proposal by Republican gubernatorial contender Judy Baar Topinka.

Tracy also wants the state to stop borrowing, delaying Medicaid payments and underfunding its public employee pension systems.

"People are very dissatisfied with state government, whether it be this administration or the previous administration," she says. "They feel we put partisan politics before the needs of the people."

Bethany Carson





*Democratic House candidate Fred Crespo*

Despite being an assistant majority leader and a Democratic negotiator, Granberg defends his voting record by saying he has had to go toe-to-toe with the speaker to protect the district. Most recently, he argued for a troubled, six-year project to bring a coal mine and gasification plant to Jefferson County. The plant aims to convert polluting Illinois coal into clean-burning synthetic gas, which would then be sold to utility companies.

Granberg says he had to defend his legislation late in the session because Madigan disagreed with the way prices were to be set for the product. "Not all of it was pleasant," he says of his meeting with Madigan. "He and I had words. I don't see my opponent doing that with Tom Cross."

Granberg says the gasification plant is back on track and stands to benefit from a better energy market compared to six years ago. "Now we're on the brink of a major, major comeback," he says.

In the meantime, he says, time spent in Chicago meeting with potential investors has sparked interest in the district.

"I'm bringing Chicago here," he says. "I'm bringing capital and resources here."

With about \$368,000 total in his campaign fund at the end of June, Granberg was well ahead of Cavaletto's \$28,000.

**The northwest suburbs** have become dangerous waters for incumbent Republicans.

Parke's district, House 44, is surrounded by districts held by other Republicans, but the Senate district encompassing his area is up for grabs. Former state Sen. Steve



*Republican state Rep. Terry Parke*

Rauschenberger vacated his seat in Senate District 22 to make an unsuccessful bid for higher office. The northwest suburbs could follow the south suburban districts, which have transitioned to Democratic control.

"The overriding theme outside of the south suburbs is the original Republican powerhouses are now gone," says Paul Green, director of policy studies at Chicago's Roosevelt University. "With them are a lot of the voters who are straight Republicans, dyed-in-the-wool Republicans, overwhelmingly Republicans."

Parke, a former insurance agent, will face a former People's Energy employee. Fred Crespo now is a real estate agent and a Hoffman Estates village trustee who got elected to the nonpartisan seat with Republican support three years ago. Because of that, he drew criticism when he registered as a Democrat to run against Parke.

Crespo, a Hispanic, calls himself a fresh face, a fiscal conservative and a social moderate. At a campaign stop in July, he said being a multicultural American gives him the listening skills to bridge gaps among different groups, key for an increasingly diverse population.

In the late 1980s, Parke represented House District 49, which had 58,000 residents, less than 4 percent of them Hispanic. As a result of redistricting and suburban sprawl, the current 44th District represents more than 77,000 people, about 12 percent of them Hispanic. That's not counting the influx of other ethnic groups, including those from Asia and Poland. Nor does that count the number of undocumented immigrants.

## Legislative campaign strategies

The state GOP will have to combat dissatisfaction with President George W. Bush by campaigning on fiscal responsibility and highlighting the fact that no Illinois Republican voted for the current state budget crafted by Democrats.

"We feel that the citizens of Illinois are pretty smart," says David Dring, spokesman for the House Republican campaign. "They have to balance their household budgets. You can't just not pay a pension payment and continue to spend money that you don't have."

The state GOP also is likely to call for ethical government, an attempt to rebound from the corruption conviction of former Republican Gov. George Ryan.

The perception that Illinois government struggles ethically also challenges the state's Democrats, as federal investigators have probed the hiring and contracting practices of Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration.

Downstate Democrats, in particular, also must battle the perception that incumbents serve as political pawns for Chicago Democratic leadership.

The allegation that downstate Democrats vote blindly with the big fish in Chicago, says Steve Brown, spokesman for the House Democratic campaign, is hypocrisy. "When it fits their purpose, they'll make reference to Chicago. But when it doesn't, it's the boogieman."

Brown says running grassroots campaigns and welcoming diversity have proved successful for the party in the past.

*Bethany Carson*

## Key legislative races

### Senate

**22nd District:** **Billie Diane Roth** (R-Streamwood) vs. **Michael Noland** (D-Elgin).

This is a fight for the seat held by former Sen. Steve Rauschenberger, an Elgin Republican, in an increasingly diverse district. Noland ran a very close race against Republican Rep. Ruth Munson for the 43rd House seat in 2004. He lost by a mere 49.2 percent to 50.8 percent.

**27th District:** **Matt Murphy** (R-Palatine) vs. **Peter Gutzmer** (D-Hoffman Estates).

This is another open seat formerly held by Republican Sen. Wendell Jones of Palatine, who won a close race in 2002 with 59.9 percent of the vote against Democrat Michael Harry Minton of Inverness.

**30th District:** Incumbent **Terry Link** (D-Waukegan) vs. **Charles Fitzgerald** (R-North Chicago). Link beat Fitzgerald with 58.5 percent of the vote in 2002, holding on to the seat he gained in an upset win in '96.

**31st District:** **Suzanne Simpson** (R-Grayslake) vs. **Michael Bond** (D-Grayslake).

This seat, open for the first time since 1979, has been held by Republican Sen. Adeline Geo-Karis of Zion. It's a predominantly Republican district with an increasing Hispanic population.

**33rd District:** Freshman **Cheryl Axley** (R-Mount Prospect) vs. **Dan Kotowski** (D-Park Ridge). Axley ran unopposed in the primaries, but a surprising number of Democrats voted in a tight Democratic primary race.

**46th District:** **Dave Koehler** (D-Peoria) vs. **Ernest Russell** (R-Peoria). Another open seat, vacated by Democratic Sen. George Shadid of Peoria, is surrounded by two other key House races.

**52nd District:** **Judith Myers** (R-Danville) vs. **Michael Frerichs** (D-Gifford) vs. **Joseph Parnaruskis** (Socialist Equality-Westville). This open Senate seat was vacated by Republican Sen. Rick Winkel of Champaign.

### House

**46th District:** **Dennis Reboletti** (R-Elmhurst) vs. **Joe Vosicky** (D-Elmhurst). This is a seat that was vacated by Republican Rep. Lee Daniels of Elmhurst, who beat Vosicky with 62.8 percent to 37.2 percent in 2004.

**62nd District:** **Sandy Cole** (R-Grayslake) vs. **Sharyn Elman** (D-Quincy). Elman ran a close race against Republican incumbent Rep. Robert Churchill of Lake Villa in 2004. Churchill won with 53.6 percent to Elman's 46.4 percent, but Churchill vacated the seat this year.

**75th District:** Incumbent **Careen Gordon** (D-Morris) vs. **Jason Briscoe** (R-Minooka). Gordon narrowly won in 2004 against Republican Doug Hayse and is seen as vulnerable again this year.

**92nd District:** Freshman **Aaron Schock** (R-Peoria) vs. **Bill Spears** (D-Peoria). Schock shocked the predominantly Democratic district by beating incumbent Rep. Ricca Slone of Peoria Heights in 2004, and he's proved to be quite a fundraiser ever since.

**91st District:** Incumbent **Michael Smith** (D-Canton) vs. **Daryl Dagit** (R-Pekin). Smith's vote for a civil rights bill, aimed at preventing housing and employment discrimination based on sexual orientation, could serve as ammunition for Dagit, a conservative.

**101st District:** Incumbent **Bob Flider** (D-Mount Zion) vs. **Dick Cain** (R-Decatur). Flider faced a brutal race in 2004 against TV reporter Scot England of Sullivan, leaving room for Cain to build on the Republican momentum if he can raise the cash.

*Bethany Carson*

Parke spoke to that issue at his annual health expo for seniors this summer in Hoffman Estates. He said one of the most difficult challenges in a diversifying district is finding advocates to reach the "silent minority," especially in rural areas.

The second-hardest challenge is in representing that diverse population 200 miles south in the state Capitol. For instance, Parke says he had to vote in accordance with 86 percent of his constituents who responded to a survey. They wanted him to oppose a measure that would grant driver's licenses to eligible immigrants.

"You have to be responsive to your base," he says. "And if you give up your base, you're out of office."

Crespo says Parke has already lost touch with voters. For instance, he says addressing inequality in education requires a regional approach. He suggests forming a suburban caucus to learn how to rectify disparity between the area's rich and poor schools.

"I don't have to go all the way to south Chicago to see disparity in funding," he said that July afternoon. "I see it here."

He stopped by Parke's senior health expo shortly before the event closed and shook hands with as many people as he could, then said he considers politics a business based on relationships.

"You can't sit in Springfield and look across the aisle and see an enemy," he said after everyone left. "Middle ground is where it's at."

Parke and Crespo offer similar approaches to suburban issues. They both say they support protecting private property owners' rights, state-sponsored health insurance for children and in-state tuition for students of undocumented parents. They also both oppose using special earmarked funds to pad the state's general revenue fund.

Parke, who's capable of raising more money as an incumbent, reported at the end of June having \$124,111 available to spend. Crespo, on the other hand, reported having \$4,571 available.

Voters can expect more state party cash to be tossed into this and a handful of other competitive races in the next two months.

"That's going to be a very big, expensive contest," Green says of House 44. "There are so few competitive races that the leaders can throw tons and tons of money, and it's a question of how many dollars these leaders want to throw at these races." □



## Plowing two fields

The constant stream of cell-phone calls, community calendars and legislative duties keeps state lawmakers busy when they're not in Springfield, but only a few are beholden to one uncontrollable stressor: the weather.

"I lay awake at night, wishing it would rain," says Rep. Donald Moffitt, a Gilson Republican.

Moffitt is one of only 10 lawmakers who still farms, manages a farm or raises livestock as a part-time job. Nine are GOP representatives: Moffitt, Rich Brauer of Petersburg, Rich Myers of Colchester, Raymond Poe of Springfield, Robert Pritchard of Sycamore, David Reis of Willow Hill, Jim Sacia of Pecatonica, Ronald Wait of Belvidere and Dave Winters of Shirland. Sen. John Sullivan of Rushville is the only Democrat still serving who farms. Former Rep. Art Tenhouse of Liberty tends to his family's centennial farm in Adams County, but he retired from the legislature this summer.

One of the last Democratic farmers was Charles Hartke, an 18-year representative from Teutopolis, who left the legislature to become director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture.

None of the current lawmakers depend on farming for income. Spring session keeps them in Springfield until the end of May, so they miss the ideal planting time of late March or early April. And their summers are spent campaigning or drafting bills for the next session — all while ensuring they have enough cash flow to cover the cost of equipment and fertilizer.

Winters, who farms near Rockford, sold most of his equipment when he joined the legislature in 1995. "Growing 200 acres of corn and soybeans, you can't compete profitwise with the full-time farmers," he says. "So I was looking for an alternative crop that would fit the legislative calendar."

He found a profitable market in prairie grass, which he originally started planting in the 1980s as part of a federal initiative to reduce the oversupply of corn and preserve wildlife habitat. Now he farms about 250 acres, half corn and soybeans, half prairie grass.

"They're perennial crops. So once the field is established, I don't have to plant it again the next year, which works perfectly for the legislative schedule," Winters says.

In the fall, he harvests, dries, cleans and tests the seed. Then he finds a way to sell it, which he can do on his way to and from Springfield.

His 70 acres of switchgrass offer even more possibilities. Switchgrass is a biomass feedstock that can be burned as energy to replace coal. It also can be converted into a type of ethanol that emits lower levels of greenhouse gases and produces more energy than corn ethanol.

Poe, who still farms 1,800 acres of corn and soybeans and



*State Rep. Dave Winters combines a 40-acre field of switchgrass in Winnebago County in October 1999. He hopes to burn switchgrass as an energy source for his home.*

custom farms another 500 acres with his son Lance Poe, says the remaining grain farmers grow a lot more acres with a lot less manpower.

"Automation has sort of taken over," he says. "You farm your ground so much faster that you don't have to have all the labor we used to have."

Few still raise animals.

Brauer, elected in 2002, had a pork operation that used to sell 50,000 finished hogs a year. He still has about 110 acres of corn and soybeans that are farmed by tenants, but he sold his family farm last year because of a string of low pork prices.

"Do I miss the smells?" he laughs. He could go without that.

A current pork producer is Reis, a fifth-generation farmer in Jasper County who supplemented his income during college by selling sows and wheat. He and his brother still raise 10,000 hogs a year, but they stopped the cattle operation in the 1990s and now specialize in one part of hog farming. He says the profit margins are thin enough that any drought, flood or disease could cost too much to recover.

"I remember grandma telling stories that it never mattered what happened, they always made it through. You can't do that anymore. Just paying for your health insurance now and cars and college educations and home improvements, it takes money. It's hard to just suck it up and make do."

Moffitt says farming keeps him awake at night, but it's a way of life. He manages 600 acres of corn and soybeans in Knox County with his son, Justin Moffitt. "I like to have him check to see who can keep the straightest rows," he jokes.

In his briefcase is a three-by-five card with a quote by Andrew Sloan Draper, president of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign at the turn of the 20th century.

Moffitt recites it from memory. "The wealth of Illinois is in her soil, and her strength lies in its intelligent development."

"That was true when it was said decades ago, but is true today."

Bethany Carson

# No simple answers

How often do police engage in racial profiling?  
Data in a state traffic stop study offer no conclusions

by Christopher Wills

Sen. Kwame Raoul wants you to slow down. Be patient. Another batch of data in Illinois' massive study of traffic stops has been released, and this is no time to be jumping to conclusions about how often police engage in racial profiling, the Chicago Democrat says.

Problem is, he — and plenty of other officials, for that matter — isn't nearly so clear on how long people must wait or just who will dig into the numbers and figure out whether Illinois has a problem.

Maybe the Illinois Department of Transportation will do it. Maybe each individual police department will have to reach its own conclusion. Maybe a yet-to-be-appointed oversight panel will organize things.

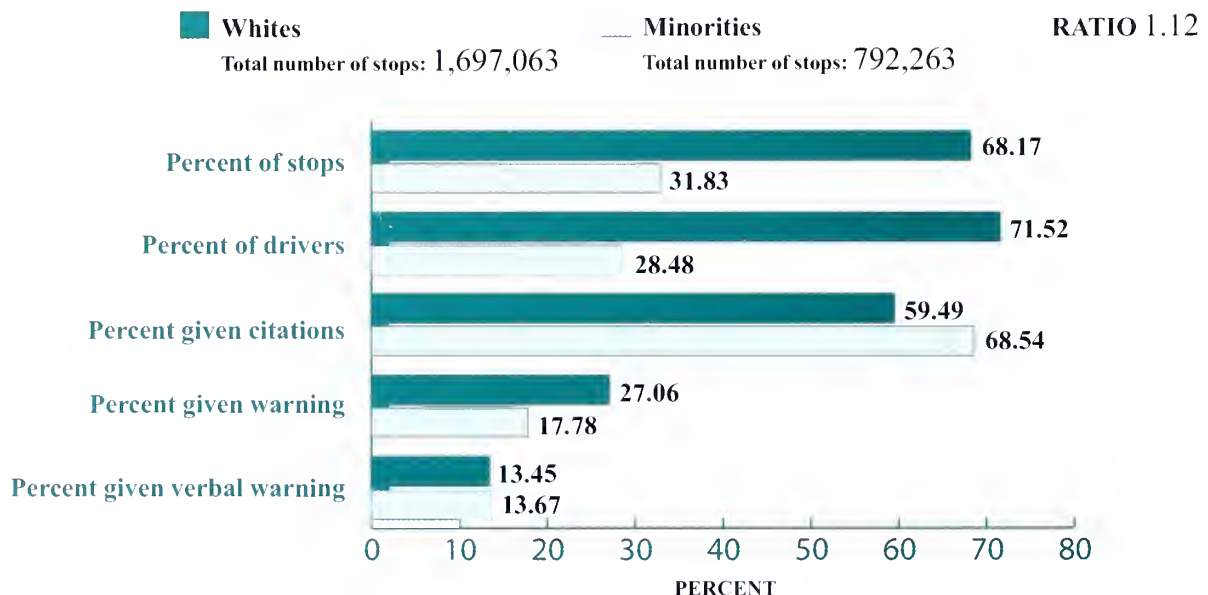
The numbers themselves certainly don't offer simple answers. This is the second year of the study, which requires every police officer in the state to turn in data — time, reason, race of the driver, whether a ticket was written and more

— about every single traffic stop.

The latest report showed a small but clear imbalance in traffic stops during 2005. Whites made up 71.5 percent of the Illinois driving population but accounted for only 68.2 percent of traffic stops.

Meanwhile, 28.5 percent of drivers were minorities, but they made up 31.8 percent of stops. The numbers also show 59.5 percent of white drivers got a ticket after being pulled over, while 68.5 percent of minority drivers were ticketed.

Illinois Traffic Stop Study, 2005



SOURCE: Illinois Department of Transportation



Only 0.74 percent of white drivers had their cars searched, but 2.1 percent of minorities gave consent for searches.

That was the situation statewide. In some cities, the imbalance was more pronounced, as shown by a ratio of minorities pulled over to minorities in the community. If, for instance, minorities made up 25 percent of a community's population and accounted for 25 percent of traffic stops, the ratio would be 1. But if 50 percent of stops involved minorities, the ratio would be 2 — and local police would face lots of questions.

The statewide ratio was 1.12. In Charleston, it was 1.98, and in Quincy 1.93. Decatur, Effingham and Springfield were all above 2. Collinsville and Moline were below 1, meaning fewer minorities were pulled over than you would expect based solely on population.

But are those imbalances a result of police bias? Are police in Decatur and Springfield targeting minorities while police in Collinsville and Moline give them a pass? That's where Raoul and others want to avoid jumping to conclusions. "I just can't emphasize enough the importance for people to be patient," says Raoul, who makes clear that, for him, the question isn't whether profiling takes place but how often.

Alexander Weiss, director of North-

western University's Center for Public Safety, compiles the traffic-stop data for the transportation department. He points out that a city might have a suspicious number of minority traffic stops not because of racism but because of heavy patrols in high-crime areas with large minority populations.

Perhaps poverty is a factor, and minorities are more likely to drive vehicles with equipment problems that attract police attention. Or maybe a department in general will have a good record, but one or two biased officers will skew its numbers.

Many departments already are analyzing the numbers and looking for problem areas or problem officers, Weiss says. He says the Illinois State Police has taken a hard look at its numbers, and the agency has hired the University of Texas at Dallas to crunch the numbers.

State Police spokesman Rick Hector told *Illinois Issues* no one at the agency was prepared to answer questions about the study.

Laimutis Nargelenas, deputy director of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police, questions the validity of the study and argues the money would be better spent installing video cameras in every squad car. But if the numbers have any use, he says, it's in helping

departments drill down and look at particular parts of town or even particular officers. "If there's something going on, that's where it's going to be," he says.

The study was supposed to run through the end of 2007, but a new law co-sponsored by Raoul extends it to July 2010 and sets up a board to oversee the study. The board, which will have 15 members, also is supposed to develop policies to prevent racial profiling and recommend whether to continue the study.

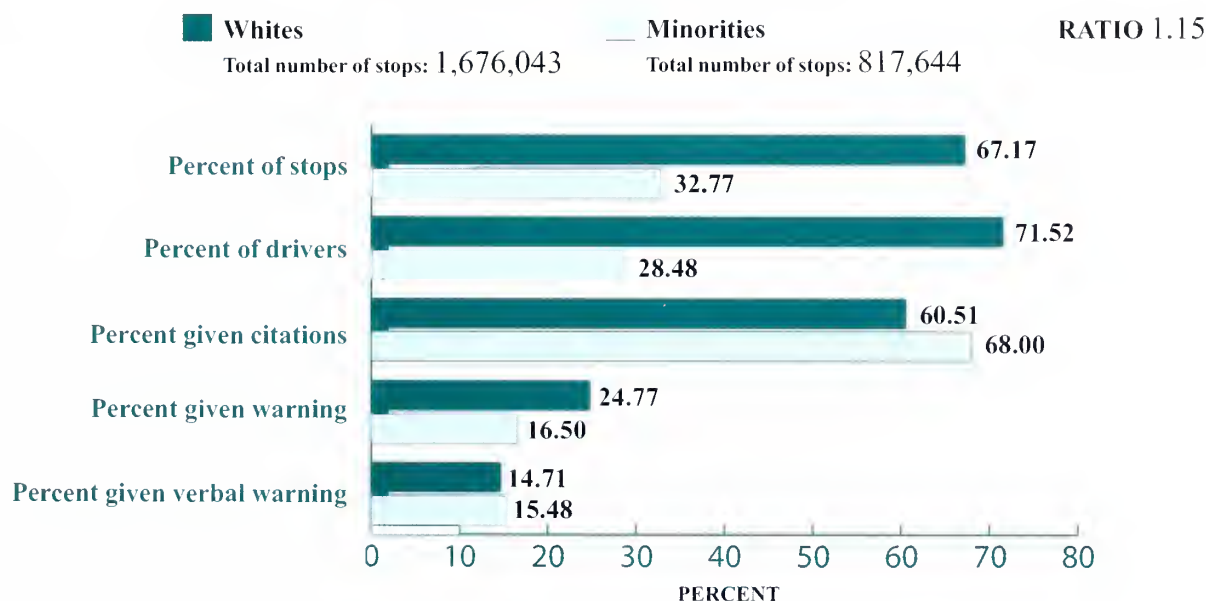
But who is responsible for determining just what all these numbers mean?

The oversight board, if it is to prevent profiling, surely will have to draw some conclusions about the extent and cause of the problem. But Raoul says it's probably up to the transportation department and its consultant, Weiss, to interpret the numbers. Weiss, however, says he doesn't know if that's his role; he says conclusions really must be drawn at the local level by individual police departments.

And what about the state as a whole and its response to the study? "My sense," Weiss says, "is that as time goes by there will be a clearer feeling of what the issues are." □

*Christopher Wills is the Statehouse correspondent for The Associated Press.*

## Illinois Traffic Stop Study, 2004



SOURCE: Illinois Department of Transportation

# SECOND CENTURY

*Illinois has set the pace in juvenile justice reforms for more than a hundred years. But this state must continue to take the lead*

by Jonathan F. Fanton

Illinois is in the vanguard of a national move to reform juvenile justice.

This summer, the new Department of Juvenile Justice took charge of juvenile corrections in Illinois. This reform rested on strong principles, sound science and good data. Despite the widespread appeal of “get-tough” measures, leaders in both major political parties worked together in recognition of a powerful truth: Young people are fundamentally different from adults, and any system dealing with crime must reflect this difference.

Our state’s leadership on the issue comes naturally. Horrified by the execution of young people over the age of 14 — and by their neglect and deaths in adult prisons — Illinois founded the world’s first juvenile justice system in 1899. The Illinois Juvenile Court Act created a “children’s court” that focused on treatment and rehabilitation. During the first decades of the 20th century, the idea spread to nearly every state in the United States and to democracies around the world.

In the mid-1990s, rising juvenile crime peaked, and the juvenile justice system came under attack. Critics called it soft, ineffective and out of step with conditions. Nationwide, lawmakers curtailed the jurisdiction of juvenile courts and the discretion of judges. New detention centers were built, more youths were tried in adult courts

and jailed with adult offenders. Juvenile courts issued more punitive sentences and funding for rehabilitative programs dwindled. Many educational services and mental health and drug abuse treatment programs disappeared entirely.

But the fundamental question remained: Were the founding principles of the juvenile justice system true? Are young people and adults really so different, and do those differences justify distinct treatment in the justice system?

With funding from the MacArthur Foundation, a network of experts in the social sciences, psychology, criminology and the law has investigated these issues over the past decade. They worked alongside juvenile justice practitioners. Their research found that most young people are not yet capable of the complex

reasoning required for legal competence because of cognitive, social and emotional immaturity. Evidence shows that youth are more likely to defer to authority figures and succumb to peer pressure. Simply put, young people are less able to recognize the risks and consequences associated with the choices they make. The U.S. Supreme Court’s 2005 decision in *Roper v. Simmons* drew heavily on these findings to invalidate the death penalty for juveniles.

Research also demonstrates that get-tough remedies have little or no impact on juvenile crime. Indeed, harsh punishment and inadequate rehabilitative services can increase recidivism and cause problems for delinquent youth later in life. For example, a study by Jeffrey Fagan at Columbia University in New York found that

adolescents processed in adult court for felonies are nearly twice as likely to be rearrested for violent offenses within six years; they are three-and-a-half times as likely to be rearrested for violent felonies; and they are 25 percent more likely to be incarcerated.

Community-based alternatives that focus on rehabilitation and treatment have proved to be more effective and less costly than incarceration. Chicago’s Community Panels for Youth brings young offenders into dialogue with their victims and members

## State juvenile justice statistics

1,434	incarcerated
2,130	on parole
92	percent male
54	percent black
11	percent Hispanic
37	percent committed a crime against a person
39	percent committed a property-related offense
12	percent committed a sex-related offense
10	percent committed a drug-related offense

SOURCE: Illinois Department of Corrections, June 30, 2005, data



of the community to address the crime and its consequences. Operating in seven of the city's most disadvantaged neighborhoods, the program's success rate is impressive: 85 percent of those who enter it do not commit another crime.

Taken together, research and experience show that children are inherently different from adults. Public systems must be designed to take such differences into account.

A five-year, \$60-million MacArthur Foundation initiative is helping officials in Illinois, Louisiana, Pennsylvania and Washington use these lessons to change their approaches to juvenile justice.

Grounded in the knowledge that young people can be redeemed, each state has embraced key principles: understanding individual differences, offering nonviolent offenders alternatives to incarceration and supporting re-integration into the community. This approach will result in fewer crimes, more functional families and more stable communities. Investing in individuals who are in trouble or at risk ultimately benefits all of us. Illinois is leading the way. For example:

- Illinois is the first state in the nation to modify its automatic transfer laws for young people charged with drug crimes. These laws automatically sent suspects as young as 15 to adult court with no possibility for judicial review of the process, their crimes or mitigating factors. In 2004, public hearings revealed that hundreds of young people were pushed into the adult system. Two-thirds were low-level offenders; 97 percent were ethnic minorities. The General Assembly unanimously overturned the laws. The legislature is monitoring the impact of those changes to ensure juvenile court retains jurisdiction for drug offenses committed by young people under age 17.
- To reduce pre-trial incarceration, the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation helps assess the risk that young offenders pose and recommends such appropriate options as evening reporting centers and electronic monitoring. The results have been significant: The population

of the Cook County juvenile detention center has dropped from an average of more than 600 youths to 450.

- Loyola University's Civitas ChildLaw Center and Northwestern University's Children and Family Justice Center are working with public defenders' offices to upgrade juvenile defense services across the state. An effort to assess juvenile defenders in Cook County was so successful that a statewide review is now being organized.
- Until recently, long delays and poor assessments hampered the Cook County Juvenile Court's ability to consider mental health. Now the Cook County Juvenile Court Clinic helps court personnel recognize mental health problems, design and carry out assessments of young people in the court system and identify resources for treatment.

## Illinois changes

**July 1, 2006** A new juvenile justice department began operation.

**February 2, 2006** MacArthur Foundation named Illinois a model state for a juvenile justice reform initiative.

**November 17, 2005** A measure was approved to tie commitment of juveniles with treatment programs.

**August 12, 2005** A law was enacted that gives judges discretion on whether to transfer 15- and 16-year-olds to adult court for drug charges.

**2003** Redeploy Illinois created financial incentives to encourage counties, rather than the state correctional system, to deal with nonviolent juvenile offenders.

**1998** Juvenile Justice Reform Act allowed judges to impose a juvenile sentence and an adult sentence that kicks in if an offender doesn't meet the requirements of the juvenile sentence.

**1995** Teens were charged in adult court unless they convinced a judge they would make use of the rehabilitation features of the juvenile court system.

SOURCE: *National Center for Juvenile Justice, Illinois General Assembly, Northwestern University's Children and Family Justice Center.*

- For years, the state covered the costs of a young person's incarceration, up to \$50,000 annually. This inadvertently encouraged communities to lock up young people instead of using more effective and less costly community programs. The Redeploy Illinois program makes state funds available for such alternatives as those now used in Macon, Peoria and St. Clair counties, and the 2nd Judicial Circuit in southern Illinois. Estimates show a 33 percent reduction in the number of young people incarcerated and savings of more than \$2 million.

- The Illinois Juvenile Justice Commission — through the largest commitment of federal dollars put toward this goal — has four pilot sites that use a data-driven process to analyze disparities and reduce the number of minorities in the system.

Additional sites will join next year.

Still, the over-representation of minorities and the differences in their treatment remains one of the juvenile justice system's most difficult and urgent challenges. It is critical to ask — and not to assume — exactly where, when, how and why these disparities arise. This is Illinois' next major task: to collect appropriate data at each decision point, from street stops to confinement and beyond; to examine the disparities along this spectrum; and to demand a process that ensures justice, fairness and accountability at each step.

As Illinois moves ahead with reform, more must be done. Advocates for juveniles are urging the state to expand the jurisdiction of juvenile corrections to age 18 and under, to increase resources for community-based programs and to expand Illinois' commitment to reducing the disproportionate number of minority young people in the system.

Expectations are high; the potential is enormous. In this second century of juvenile justice, Illinois must continue to take the lead in demanding justice, fairness and accountability in the treatment of youngsters in trouble with the law. □

*Jonathan F. Fanton is president of the Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.*

# SHAPE SHIFTING

*Everyone thinks they know what it is. Yet a new assessment of sprawl would seem to be welcome among its critics*

Review essay by James Krohe Jr.

The Pretenders' Chris Hynde, rock'n'roll's Jane Jacobs, put the case against sprawl in her 1983 lament, *My City Was Gone*.

*My pretty countryside  
had been paved down the middle  
by a government that had no pride.  
The farms of Ohio  
had been replaced by shopping malls  
and Muzak filled the air  
from Seneca to Cnyahoga Falls.*

Songwriters with guitars are not our only thinkers to damn urban sprawl. Academics, efficient-government reformers, architects and environmentalists have been singing along with Hynde, so to speak, since the 1950s. Sprawl is the subject of helpful conferences, earnest policy papers and sputtering polemics, and it even briefly appeared as a theme in a presidential campaign. All agree it is bad, yet no one agrees exactly what to do about it.

A new and readable assessment of the phenomenon would seem to be welcome among such critics. Robert Bruegmann's *Sprawl: A Compact History* is not, however, that book. The author — a widely published professor of architectural history at the University of Illinois at Chicago — insists that nearly everything we've heard about urban sprawl is wrong.

Sprawl, as everyone thinks they know, is the postwar blight wreaked by dispersed, auto-dependent development on the urbanizing fringe of our cities. The result

is a landscape widely condemned as peripheral in every way, a maze of look-alike subdivisions and tacky malls, a numbing not-quite-city filled with endless pavement and bored kids. While usually reckoned a phenomenon of the suburbs, sprawl is reshaping all Illinois cities that have room to expand within their municipal boundaries, creating new cities-within-the-city that, while "urban" in a legal sense, are suburban in form and function.

These are not only new cities, but bad ones. Sprawl is polluting the air and has left the nation dangerously dependent on foreign oil. Sprawl accounts for the nation's shrinking farmland base and its expanding midriff. Depending on whom you read, these unhappy trends are the results of some mix of a federal conspiracy against cities, a socially pernicious impulse among middle-class whites to flee the city and its problems, or a conscienceless capitalism run amok.

Bruegmann insists that this brief is mostly uninformed or dishonest. He offers as a rejoinder a history of sprawl around the world, brief histories of anti-sprawl activism in three recent eras and a summary of the principal measures so far taken by governments in Europe and the United States to contain it. The lessons of this rather miscellaneous survey confound the popular understanding of the issue on nearly every point. Sprawl is indeed a postwar phenomenon — post-Civil War. Look at what happened

in Chicago. Illinois' Ur city has been sprawling since after the Civil War. Ann Durkin Keating, in her book *Chicagoland*, reports that in the 19th and early 20th centuries, no fewer than 233 settlements were founded in the collar counties. (Many of these settlements are now Chicago neighborhoods that have been stripped of suburban status by annexation.) Bruegmann notes there is nothing new in "edge cities," either, save the fact that they are now being built in suburbs. Places like Schaumburg are merely the most recent version of the business centers that once lay inside municipal borders, such as the area around Halsted and 63rd in the Englewood neighborhood on Chicago's South Side, which in the 1920s was second only to the Loop in the conduct of retail business.

Sprawl in big U.S. cities not only predates the automobile, it predates the United States. Hardly a product of postwar automobile culture, sprawl goes back at least as far as the Romans (from whom we borrowed the term suburb, or *suburbium*). Far from a peculiarly American disease, sprawl in its familiar form is a disease we caught from the Brits, who invented the modern suburb in the 17th and 18th centuries.

As for another recurring theme in much recent anti-sprawl writing — that suburbs foster a sense of alienation or decline in civic engagement — Bruegmann reminds readers that it was only 50 years ago that





sociologists were describing how it was the central cities that were causing alienation and suburbs that were turning their residents into compulsive joiners and volunteers. And far from a product of the private automobile, peripheral residential development on a mass scale was a product of mass transit. The nickel streetcar ride allowed the lower-

middle-class out to the then-periphery of our cities, where land was cheap enough that a new house was within reach financially as well as physically. And if we want to see mile after mile of cookie-cutter houses, we shouldn't look on today's suburbanizing fringe but in the bungalow belt, most of which was built on former farm fields when hundreds of thousands of Chicagoans began to move in the 1920s.

If sprawl is not new, neither are attempts to rein it in. Bruegmann notes, accurately, that critics of sprawl are mainly people from the upper-middle-class, including what Bruegmann calls "an elite group of academics, central-city business leaders, and employees of not-for-profit organi-

zations." (One is obliged to note that the critics of the sprawl critics, including Bruegmann, also come from this elite stratum.)

'Twas always thus. Nearly a century ago, Progressive-Era reformers from that same group organized into bodies such as Chicago's Citizens' Committee of One Hundred to argue for an end to Illinois' overlapping local governments on grounds of efficiency. Today's anti-sprawlers have added a further reason for regionalizing some government functions — cooling the competition for taxable projects that creates a buyer's market for developers — but the larger dynamic is little changed.

Cities — growing, prosperous cities

anyway — make sprawl necessary by rendering the city center crowded, dirty, dangerous and expensive. They also make sprawl possible by generating the wealth people need to escape it.

Bruegmann's ultimate point is that the desire for more privacy, more space and the social comfort of dwelling among people of one's own class —

whatever their color or creed — seems universal, with the result that dispersal to the urban fringe happens whenever and wherever people have enough money and enough freedom to move. In short, given a certain level of wealth and a free market in land, sprawl is inevitable and universal.

"Although sprawl has developed differently at different times and in different places," Bruegmann writes, "the history of sprawl suggests that the two factors that seem to track most closely with sprawl have been increasing affluence and political democratization."

That is not to say that automobile suburbs are to everyone's taste. They are often damned as ugly, for example,

***The social problems caused by subdivision life are hardly on a par with those that fester in slums or the worst of our public housing projects. Yet “sprawl” is used almost universally as a pejorative, applied with as much malice, and as little accuracy, as the word “slum” when used to denote any poor neighborhoods.***

although this may be a carelessly chosen word. (The public realm of such places is jumbled, certainly, even incoherent, and certainly banal, but in ugliness even the meanest retail strip scarcely compares with their equivalents across the city line in Chicago.) We don't really know how to design for the low-density city. Its characteristic elements, such as wide setbacks from the street, are intended to create an ambiance that is not urban. The problem is, such environments are not much of anything else either.

Happily, to some extent, sprawl and such related ills as road congestion sow the seeds of their own reform. Consider transportation. Commuting times in the United States did not increase much between 1960 and 1990, a period when sprawl was sprawliest, because the decentralization of residences was accompanied by a decentralization of jobs. Development spurs rises in land costs, with the result that the number of dwelling units per acre has been going up; sprawl is becoming less sprawly, as much of the new housing in many suburbs is in the form of multi-unit projects such as rowhouses.

A city that requires a three-bus commute to a minimum-wage job is not a city that works, in the opinion of the

dishwasher who cleans the plates after every anti-sprawl conference. L lines are being extended — slowly, yes — into suburban job centers like Schaumburg. Even middle-class workers with nice cars who find the daily commute unpleasant and time-consuming are buying housing clustered nearer their jobs. This has transformed both the old working-class parts of Chicago just outside the Loop into dormitories for the upscale and generated city-style condo and rowhouse and flats-above-the-shops developments near transit stops in the suburbs. Which is exactly what happened in Chicago a century ago, of course; just as the city went from farmhouses to weekend places to bungalows to four-flats to condo towers, so the suburbs are going from single-family ranches to townhouses to, well, condo towers.

Sprawl places are preferred by certain kinds of people for living certain kinds of lives — just as city neighborhoods are, come to think of it. The social problems caused by subdivision life are hardly on a par with those that fester in slums or the worst of our public housing projects. Yet “sprawl” is used almost universally as a pejorative, applied with as much malice, and as little accuracy, as the word “slum” when used to denote any poor neighborhoods. The fevered nature of the complaints about sprawl is reflected in the titles of such recent jeremiads as *Sprawl Kills: How Blandburbs Steal Your Time, Health And Money; The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape*; and *Bourgeois Nightmares: Suburbia, 1870-1930*.

Bruegmann traces this animus to social class. “Wherever and whenever a new class of people has been able to gain some of the privileges once exclusively enjoyed by an entrenched group,” he writes, “the chorus of complaints has suddenly swelled.”

Not surprisingly, this has happened during every period of major prosperity because during these times a greater number of families have enjoyed a greater choice of living arrangements. Predictably, every time this has occurred, in the judgment of certain already well-established groups, the newcomers have made the “wrong”

choices. Also predictably, criticism of sprawl has virtually always been aimed at people outside the speaker's or writer's own circle.

“Sprawl is where other people live,” asserts Bruegmann, speaking more frankly for his critics than they usually do, “particularly people with less taste and good sense than themselves.” This is unkind to sprawl's many critics, but not especially unfair. As Bruegmann makes plain, most of the arguments against sprawl from social and environmental perspectives are little more than rationalizations of what is, in essence, a cultural judgment.

Viewed thus, the countryside is one more thing — television, higher education and politics are among the many others — that have been ruined by the participation of the larger public. Its customs, its tastes in clothes and architecture, most of all its casual indifference to the city, offend the cultivated urbanite. Contempt for the subdivision/mall lifestyle runs through most anti-sprawl writing, and is expressed in language strikingly reminiscent of that used by previous generations to sneer at the small town or the Old Country.

Class bias is not the only impulse behind the reflexive rejection of low-density development. As noted, sprawl is nearly universally blamed on the post-World War II prosperity and its evils, such as expressways and general automobile ownership. This analysis certainly isn't buttressed by history; as Bruegmann notes, “Postwar suburbanization and sprawl were different in scale but not really different in kind from what had gone before ... in American cities for more than a century, particularly in the boom periods of the 1880s and 1920s.” In Mayer and Wade's *Chicago: Growth of a Metropolis*, a photograph of the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's far West Side — new houses here and there in a landscape festooned with scrawny trees and new streets as yet uncluttered by houses — is the very image of sprawl. It was taken around 1890.

Why then this peculiar focus on the past 50 years? Because that was when the baby boomers were growing up. A generation who grew up in those post-war subdivisions preaching the need for change now recoil with dismay at seeing change invade the sacred precincts of



their childhoods. Thus the weirdly anachronistic cast of their criticisms. They castigate “Ozzie and Harriet” suburbs as if it were still the ’50s, notes Bruegmann, though suburbs were never exclusively white, middle-class bedroom communities even then. In fact, today’s Illinois suburbs are as diverse socially, economically and racially as the city neighborhoods they are beginning to resemble.

Nostalgia is merely one form of our cultural narcissism. Many people (and not only Americans) lament the loss of a countryside whose virtues were ruined by people who moved in just after they did. Only ignorance of local history insulates from self-criticism the people who throng to Illinois’ “heritage farms” on summer weekends to see recreated the kinds of places that the construction of their houses caused to disappear. In this they are like the elites who built faux-country estates outside Chicago a century ago. They didn’t think of their new houses as sprawl, although they must have seemed so to the farmers they displaced, just as those farms had seemed like sprawl (though they lacked a word for it) to the Potawatomi whose Eden the farmers had destroyed.

*Sprawl* is part report, part polite polemic. It is not, however, a prescription. This will frustrate some readers and annoy others who believe that an author who presumes to criticize reformers’ ideas without offering better ones is derelict in his responsibilities as a public issues pundit.

If critics are too often hysterical in advancing the case against sprawl, Bruegmann can be a bit glib in dismissing it. The fact that sprawl is a manifestation of city life with a long pedigree is hardly grounds for accepting it; so is tuberculosis. The flow of federal subsidies to cities and suburbs deserves a more sophisticated analysis than it gets here. Bruegmann is most sound when he is talking about what he knows, which is cities and their histories. *Sprawl* will become an indispensable primer on the subject, insofar as apologists will be able to mine it for insights, and critics of sprawl will have to tailor their arguments to take it into account.

Some will find it hard medicine to swallow, however good it is for them.

Bruegmann offers an explicitly libertarian take on issues that many will find not just unpersuasive but unpalatable. For example, we can rue that suburban new house buyers don’t pay all the public costs of their private decisions, but, like it or not, avoiding social costs is precisely why so many Americans love the suburbs.

“A proliferation of small governments,” he notes, “has made it possible for citizens not only to choose the kind of community and the kind of services they wish but also to have a larger voice in planning for the future than they would in a larger regional government.”

Usually, the kind of community citizens instruct their small governments to provide is one without the complication, exception and unpredictability of the city. The impulse is not one that Bruegmann (unlike most sprawl critics) presumes to judge. The educated cosmopolitan thrills at the chance to mingle on the street every day with people he would never invite to dinner, but most people do not. For them, the good life is lived in places where all their neighbors are pretty much like they are — whatever their color and accent.

Bruegmann argues that many things about our spread-out cities are good, and that while some things about them are bad, they are less bad than imposing a solution through government *diktat*. “The most convincing answer to the question of why sprawl has persisted over so many centuries,” he observes, “seems to be that a growing number of people have believed it to be the surest way to obtain some of the privacy, mobility, and choice that once were available only to the wealthiest and most powerful members of society.” The United States is, for the moment, a democratic republic; if sprawl is what most people like, most people — acting through the market or their elected agents in local government — will get just that.

The “problem” with sprawl, in short, is the problem with democracy. Changing present land use policies means leaving decisions in hands other than the public’s. That’s been tried, in other realms, with results that are often well-intended, but seldom wise. In the end, the reformers’ program consists of the hope that Americans will follow their



## SPRAWL

*A Compact History*

**Robert Bruegmann**

University of Chicago Press, 2005

## CHICAGOLAND

*City and Suburbs in the Railroad Age*

**Ann Durkin Keating**

University of Chicago Press, 2005

## CHICAGO

*Growth of a Metropolis*

**Harold M. Mayer**

**and Richard C. Wade**

University of Chicago Press, 1969

advice and become better people. This is much to be desired, but not to be expected.

Bruegmann argues that the remedies so far advanced for such social ills not only probably won’t work but probably shouldn’t work; banning land for new housing drives up costs, for example. “[The agitation against sprawl] is being directed toward things that may not be real problems,” he complains, “or problems that can’t be solved without causing severe unintended consequences and real losses for part of the population.”

Sure, the dispersed city causes problems — pollution, energy dependence, social exclusion, the built ugliness of the public realm — that merit attention. The old compact city caused problems too, at first. Most of these have been solved, or at least rendered tolerable. However, if people of influence refuse to engage our new kind of city, thus never coming to understand it, they are unlikely to be able to solve its new kind of problems. Fixing them by simply reining in sprawl, Bruegmann insists, is a bit like fixing a squeaky hinge by rebuilding your house. □

*James Krohe Jr., a veteran commentator on Illinois public issues, is writing a guide to the state’s history for the Illinois Humanities Council. He is a frequent contributor to Illinois Issues.*

## Powered up

**Tim Anderson**, former aide to Chicago Democratic Senate President Emil Jones Jr., is the new executive director of the Illinois Commerce Commission, the state agency that regulates utilities.

His task this month will involve the state's first power auction. Utilities will bid on supplying power to Ameren and Commonwealth Edison in 2007. Consumers, meanwhile, will pay higher energy rates, which have been frozen since a deregulation law was approved in 1997.

Anderson, who lives in Chatham, previously served as assistant director of legislative affairs and Senate liaison for Secretary of State Jesse White.

## Capitol architect

**Donald McLarty**, a 23-year veteran of historic buildings restoration, will finish one state Capitol then come to Illinois to restore the next. He will start as Illinois' architect of the Capitol October 1 after finishing an \$80-million renovation of Virginia's Capitol. His projects here will involve renovation of the Capitol and possible demolition of the Stratton Office Building.

## Ex-aide sentenced

**Michael Tristano**, a top aide to former Republican House Leader Lee Daniels of Elmhurst, was sentenced to one year and one day in prison in July for ordering legislative staffers to do campaign work on state time.

He was originally indicted on nine counts of fraud, theft and extortion conspiracy. But Tristano's sentence departed from federal guidelines, part of a deal for a guilty plea and cooperation with ongoing federal investigations, according to Randall Samborn, spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office.

In March, Tristano, a Glenview resident, pleaded guilty for directing staffers to use their paid absences from the state on campaign work between 1998 and 2001. He also agreed to pay \$125,000 in restitution to cover the state's estimated losses.

## New justice



*Justice Anne Burke*

**Anne Burke** became the third woman to sit on the Illinois Supreme Court. This summer, she replaced the first, retiring Chief Justice **Mary Ann McMorrow**.

Burke's interim appointment runs until December 2008, when the seat's 10-year term will be up for election.

Burke, founder of Special Olympics Chicago, started law school in 1980 with four children younger than 10, according to the state Supreme Court. Upon graduation from Chicago-Kent College of Law, she opened a neighborhood law office on Chicago's South Side. For 11 years, she practiced criminal trial work and represented cases involving child abuse, delinquency and parental custody.

In 1987, she was named to the Court of Claims by former Republican Govs. James Thompson and Jim Edgar. She resigned from that position in 1994 to

become Edgar's special counsel for child welfare services.

Edgar says her work with the Department of Children and Family Services in the 1990s proved she could deal with the heavy load of a strained system and achieve the balance necessary for a judge: compassion and determination.

"She got things done, but she understood the parameters and the realities that you had to deal with," he says.

Appointed to the Appellate Court in 1995, Burke was elected to the Appellate Court, First District, for a full term a year later.

## Administrative moves

**Cheryle Jackson**, Gov. Rod Blagojevich's communications director since he took office, will become the first woman president and chief executive of the 90-year-old Chicago Urban League.

Starting October 1, she will succeed **James Compton**. Her previous work included overseeing public affairs for Amtrak and directing corporate communications for National Public Radio.

**David Ellis**, partner in the Chicago law firm Williams, Bax and Ellis, will be House Speaker Michael Madigan's new legal counsel. Ellis' previous state work included serving as House assistant legal counsel.

He replaces **Robert Uhe**, Madigan's chief attorney for the past eight years. Uhe will return to the private sector. He will remain in Springfield but join the law firm of Mayer, Brown, Rowe and Maw as a partner in the Government and Global Trade Practice Group.

## Son takes father's place on Cook County ballot

**Todd Stroger**, a Chicago alderman, convinced Cook County Central Committee Democrats to choose him to replace his father, **John Stroger**, as the party's candidate for the presidency of the Cook County Board. The elder Stroger, who had been president since 1994, suffered a stroke a week before winning the March primary. He announced in July that he would step down as board president and as a candidate for re-election.

Todd Stroger will run in November against Republican County Commissioner **Tony Peraica** of Riverside.

**For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* Web site at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>**



## Legislator retires

State Rep. **Larry McKeon**, Illinois' first openly gay legislator and a major force behind protecting others against discrimination based on sexual orientation, announced his retirement in July.

The Chicago Democrat will step down when his term ends in January. He recommended **Jim Snyder**, attorney for the Illinois Human Rights Commission, to replace him on the November ballot. The district is predominantly Democratic.

Snyder is a former attorney for the Chicago Housing Authority and founding member of AIDS Care, an organization that supports patients with housing and health care.

McKeon was diagnosed with AIDS and colorectal cancer last year, an experience he calls educational. He met children undergoing radiation and chemotherapy who amazed him, including one who pushed McKeon's wheelchair into treatment sessions.

Doing well now, McKeon says it's time to do some other things: travel, work part-time with advocacy groups and volunteer to work with children who are dealing with cancer. He's also writing a book about gay and lesbian politics in Chicago and hopes to find a way to help others run for public office.

McKeon also may return to teaching public management, policy and survey research at a community college.

His 42 years in public service, including 12 with the L.A. Sheriff's Department, was a career he hadn't expected. "Not in my wildest dreams," he says. But, he adds, "I'm extremely grateful."

McKeon's legislative work, especially his persistence in expanding the state's Human Rights Act, has been a capstone to a long and distinguished career, House Speaker Michael Madigan said in a statement.

"Larry has always carried himself with tremendous degrees of reserve and humility — no small feat in the world of politics and rather uncommon traits for someone who is also rightly called a trailblazer," Madigan wrote. "These qualities helped him to pass legislation that would otherwise have remained stalled and earned him the respect and admiration of colleagues on both sides of the aisle."

"He will be greatly missed."

---

## State reporter goes national

**Christi Parsons**, a Statehouse reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* for the past 11 years, will become a national correspondent in the *Tribune's* Washington, D.C., bureau after the November 7 election. She will write about the Illinois congressional delegation and federal policy that affects the paper's Illinois readership.

"Politics is interesting. It's great theater. It's funny, and it's maddening, and it's fun to talk about over dinner or at a cocktail party, but what's really important is how it makes people's lives better or worse," she says.

Parsons considers the move bittersweet — an opportune time to arrive on the national scene to cover Illinois' prominent lawmakers, but difficult to leave good friends and "competent colleagues" in the Statehouse press corps.

The *Tribune* will hire a new Springfield reporter.

---

## Another challenge

**Abner Mikva** will add to a resume that includes federal judge, congressman and state legislator. He's the new chairman of the Illinois Human Rights Commission, a panel that investigates discrimination and is rooted in some of Mikva's legislative work.

In the 1950s and '60s — when Mikva says African-American legislators were not allowed to stay in the same hotel as their white colleagues — he co-sponsored state legislation with the late Paul Simon to create the Fair Employment Practices Commission.

"Enforcement power," he says, "didn't come until much later."

Mikva says the rights commission's new mission is to ensure all forms of discrimination are recognized and everyone has access to a fair trial.

He replaces **J.B. Pritzker**.

## State ethics chief



*James Brennan*

**James Brennan**, the state's newest chairman of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission, prefers "getting the banana peels out of the way before

anyone slips on them."

A former government compliance manager for Motorola, Brennan says his personality is collaborative and geared to building a culture where people are inclined to do the right thing.

That's the role he sees for the state's ethics commission, created by a 2003 law and equipped with one independent inspector general for each constitutional officer. The inspectors are to investigate allegations that state employees or contractors are violating ethics laws or making improper campaign donations. They also are charged with recommending action and referring severe cases to the attorney general and to the commission. So far, though, not one case has made it to the commission.

Brennan says the law includes "secrecy provisions" that prevent the inspectors from sharing their investigations, findings or recommendations with the commission. By default, that keeps the public in the dark, he says. "I think the public perceives that things are being swept under the rug, and I don't know if that's the case because I'm not privy to what's happening."

Brennan lives in Wheaton and is a senior counsel and chief ethics officer for a New Jersey company that provides corporate compliance and business ethics solutions. He replaces the first chair of the commission, **Scott Turow**.

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## Sentenced

**Alexandra "Andrea" Coutretsis** will serve four months in prison rather than the maximum 18 months; she convinced her boyfriend to testify in the federal corruption trial of former Gov. George Ryan. Coutretsis initially lied to investigators to protect her fiancé **Scott Fawell**, Ryan's top aide. The judge said six lies were too many to grant her immunity.

## LETTERS

### Energy producers not given balanced treatment in issue

I just received the July/August edition of *Illinois Issues* and am compelled to write my first letter to the editor of this outstanding publication. My question is, "What happened to your usual balanced professional approach to issues?"

From start to finish, this edition of the magazine was as one-sided as any left- or right-wing publication I have ever seen.

In an entire magazine devoted to promoting any and all environmental causes found in our state, I was hard pressed to find one small mention in a quote from state Rep Dave Winters of the need to take the state's economic well-being into account when formulating public policy on environmental issues. For example, your lead article on air quality by Bethany Carson contains numerous quotes from advocates but not one response or opinion from the energy

industry or the business community in general. That pattern is maintained throughout the issue.

In fact, Illinois energy producers have a strong record of slashing pollution over the past 30 years — including a significant new round of cuts in the past few years — all while helping ensure that we have a reliable and affordable supply of electricity in this state — and supporting thousands of good, union jobs. Furthermore, we are preparing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars over the next decade to achieve even greater reductions and are testing new pollution control technologies that will bring major cuts in mercury emissions.

A truly professional and balanced journalistic approach would involve at least providing an opportunity for others to be heard on these issues. I am extremely disappointed in your magazine's failure to live up to its usually high standards.

*Jim Monk*  
*Illinois Energy*



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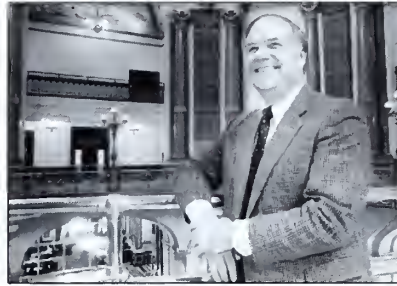
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Charles N. Wheeler III



## A shroud of government secrecy threatens the notion of self-government

by Charles N. Wheeler III

**L**ike dry rot slowly undermining a home's floor joists, an insidious trend is eating away at the nation's historic underpinnings.

The peril comes not from the chance that more governments will recognize formally committed relationships between same-sex couples. Neither is it the possibility that the national anthem will be widely sung in Spanish, nor even growing support for smoke-free environs. Rather, the danger is the spreading shroud of government secrecy that elected and appointed officials are pushing to cloak their actions from public scrutiny.

The closed-door mentality attacks the core principle upon which the United States was established, the notion of self-government. Simply put, the founders believed that everyday citizens had the capacity to rule themselves, to make decisions about who should be their leaders and what policies should be pursued for the common good. No longer would people answer to hereditary monarchs or autocratic emperors; high priests and shamans were not needed.

But that radical departure from 18th-century norms depended on a very big assumption: that the average person would have available the information required to make sound judgments on public issues. Indeed, the founders crafted the First Amendment guarantees of free speech and free press precisely to encourage the marketplace of ideas and to assure the free flow of information.

---

*At the federal level, reporters' ability to gather information has been undercut by increasingly broad claims of national security, executive privilege and privacy rights.*

Over time, the media assumed the role as the eyes and ears of the public, keeping people abreast of current issues and serving as watchdogs over government behavior. Public officials didn't always enjoy the spotlight, particularly when an enterprising reporter caught them with their hands in the cookie jar, but the citizenry generally has been well-served by journalists' dedication to providing their readers and listeners the facts needed to make informed judgments.

In recent years, however, the commitment to open government has weakened. At the federal level, reporters' ability to gather information has been undercut by increasingly broad claims of national security, executive privilege and privacy rights. Moreover, prosecutors and judges appear more inclined to force journalists to disclose confidential sources, thus discouraging whistle-blowers. And some

politicians even have suggested that reporters and editors be charged with treason for publishing stories about covert federal counter-terrorism surveillance programs that some critics consider unconstitutional.

Closer to home, Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration has refused reporters' requests to make public subpoenas served on a host of state agencies as part of an ongoing investigation into what federal prosecutors termed "allegations of endemic hiring fraud." The administration contends the subpoenas are part of the grand jury process and thus confidential, an assertion under review by state Attorney General Lisa Madigan. In the past, Madigan has held that most subpoenas are public records subject to the state's Freedom of Information law.

The administration's reluctance reflects a broader pattern, as Blagojevich has sought to exert tighter control over state government news than any governor in recent memory. He is rarely available to Statehouse reporters, for example, and veteran journalists find it difficult to get information that was routine in the past.

When public officials try to control information and reporters have a harder time doing their jobs, average citizens should be concerned, says Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, a not-for-profit organization that provides legal advice to journalists and champions government transparency.

"That's not the way the founders intended us to operate," she says. "They really believed that citizens should be empowered to participate in their government [and] to do that, to make good decisions at the ballot box, you have to have access to quality information."

A common misconception, Dalglish notes, is that "sunshine" laws, like Freedom of Information and Open Meeting acts, are intended to give special privileges to journalists. "They're not for the benefit of reporters, but of society as a whole." Few citizens have the time to attend all the meetings of public bodies, or participate in all the decisions that are made; instead, citizens must turn to the media to provide quality information. "We rely on reporters as our surrogates," she says. If people are not able to find out what government is doing, "they're in a lousy position to make good decisions about who should lead them and how to live in the community."

Dalglish believes voters should let political candidates know that open government is important to them. "Ask

***Closer to home, Gov. Rod Blagojevich's administration has refused reporters' requests to make public subpoenas served on a host of state agencies.***

them how they feel about access to information, what they've done to make it easier for citizens to know what their government is up to," she suggests. Also, local schools should provide a firm foundation in basic civics "so that students know the role free information plays in our continuing progress as a society," she adds.

Education about open government is also good for public officials and workers, says Madigan. Most of the complaints her office fields about state sunshine laws reflect misunderstandings about the

statutes' requirements, rather than deliberate evasions, she notes.

To help ensure that government units conduct business openly and handle public records requests properly, Madigan appointed Terry Mutchler, an attorney and former Statehouse bureau chief for The Associated Press, as public access counselor. In her first year on the job, Mutchler handled more than 1,000 cases dealing with the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings acts, and conducted 75 training sessions statewide for government officials, the media and interested citizens, according to the access counselor's annual report.

Interestingly, almost 77 percent — 773 of 1,011 cases — originated with citizens concerned about closed meetings or problems in obtaining documents. Fourteen percent came from government officials, and the remainder — less than 10 percent — were from reporters.

The founders would be pleased. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois at Springfield.*



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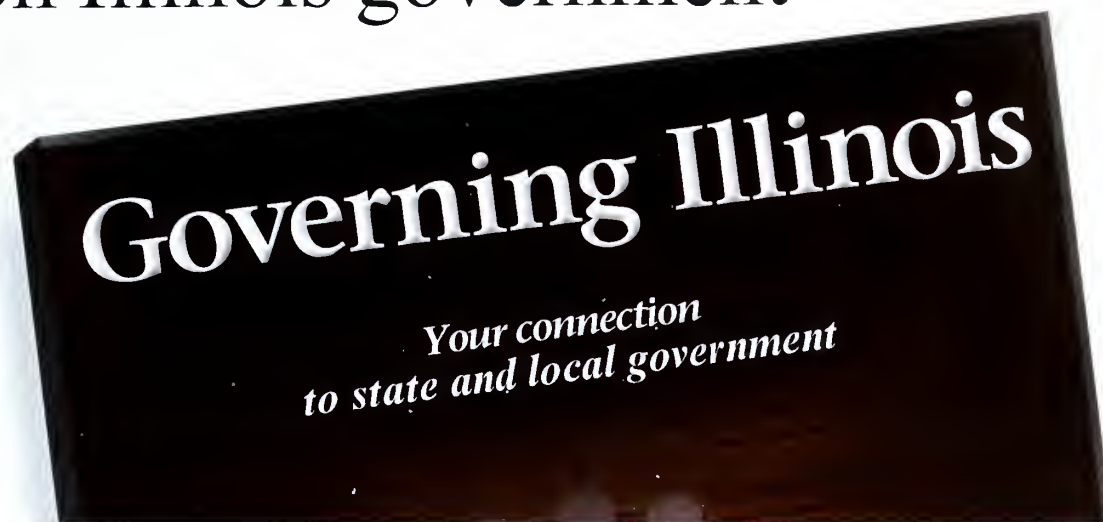
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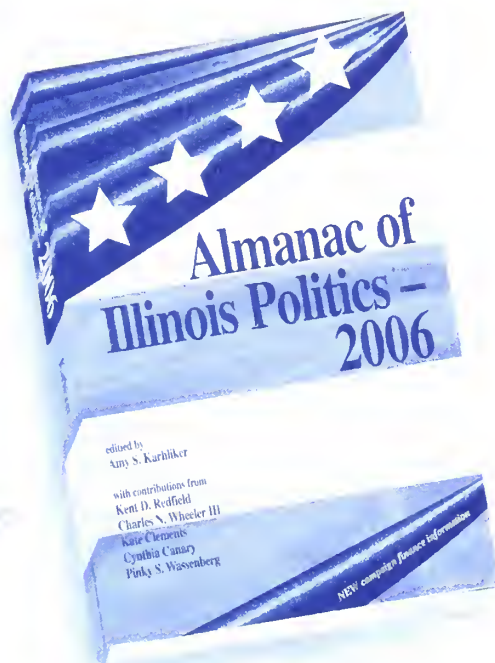
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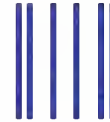
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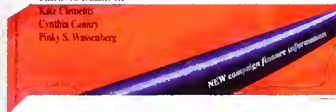
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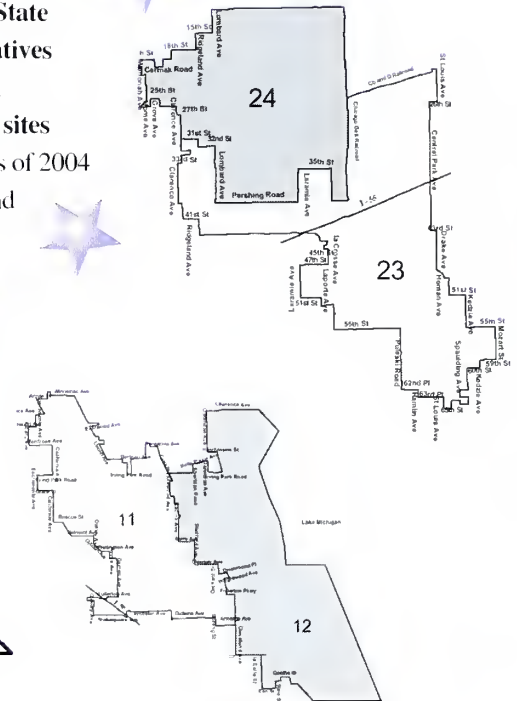
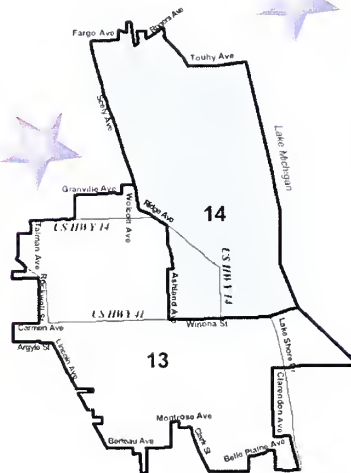
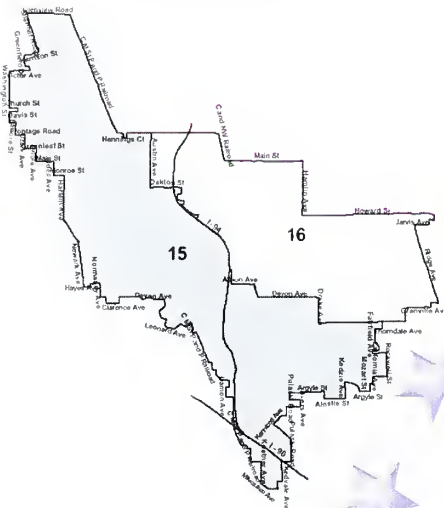
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